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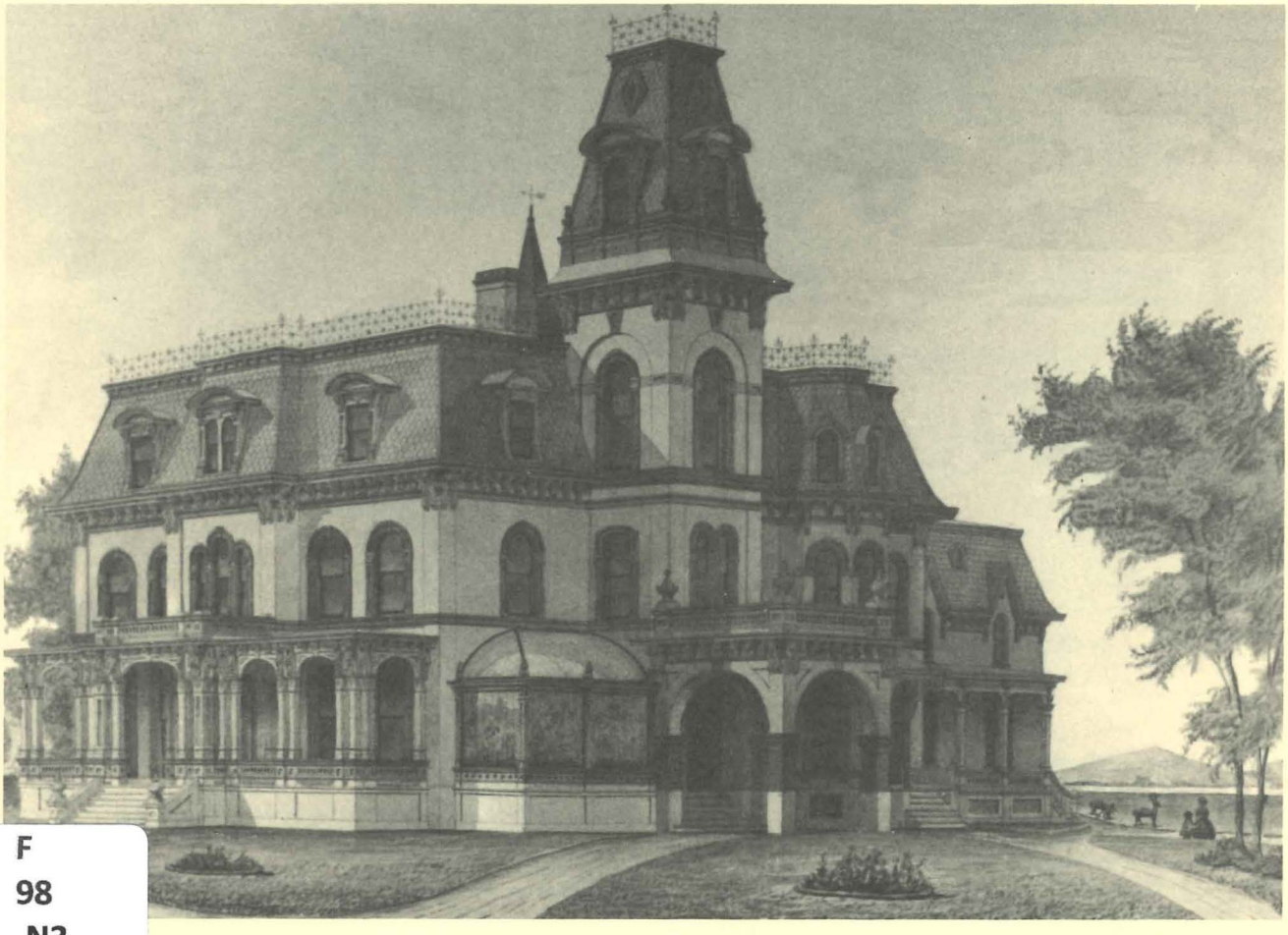
of The New Haven Colony Historical Society



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"The object of the Society shall be the collection, preservation and publication of historical and genealogical matter relating to the early settlement and subsequent history, especially of New Haven and its vicinity, and incidentally of other portions of the United States."

The museum and library of the Society are open to the public. There is a fee of $2 to non-members for use of the library; the museum is open free of charge. In addition to the Whitney Avenue building, the Society owns the Pardee-Morris House at 325 Lighthouse Road, Morris Cove, New Haven. Built originally about the middle of the eighteenth century, it was burned during the British invasion in 1779. Rebuilt at once, it incorporates surviving portions of the older structure. The Pardee-Morris House is now restored and furnished appropriately and is open to the public during the summer months.

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Cover: One of Rufus Russell's (1823-1896) renderings of a robust Victorian mansion. The New Haven Colony Historical Society's collection of architectural drawings includes more than 200 renderings of his designs.

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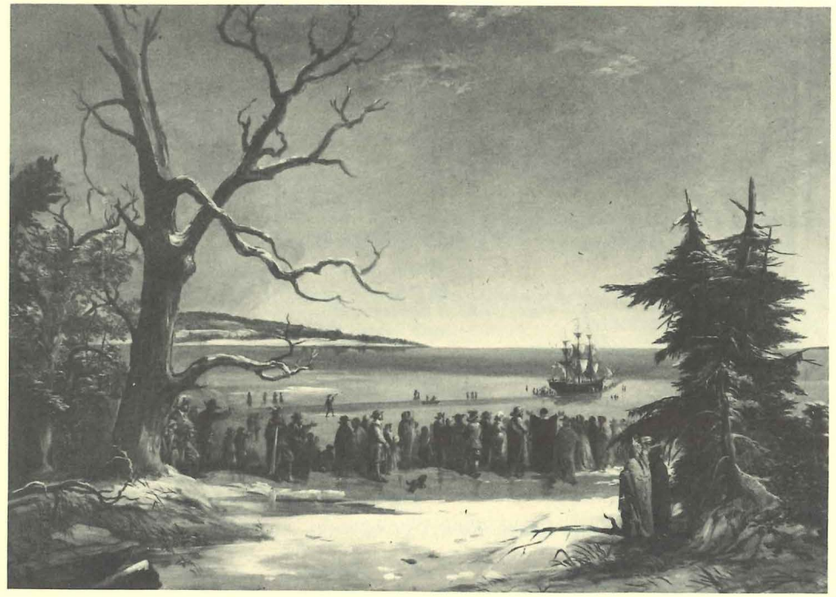


Two Quinnipiac Indians, along with John Davenport (dressed in a black robe) and other New Haveners, watch the "phantom ship" depart on its fateful journey in 1646.
"Embarkation of the phantom ship" Jesse Talbot. *From the collection of the New Haven Colony Historical Society*

The Strange Case of Nepaupuck:
Warrior or War Criminal?

by John Menta

During the early hours of April 23, 1637, a band of two hundred Pequot Indians paddled their large dugout canoes up the Connecticut River to the settlement of Wethersfield, Connecticut. Before the break of dawn, the Pequot warriors skillfully concealed themselves on, or close to, an island across from the Great Plain.[1] This spacious meadow, lying between the town of Wethersfield and the west bank of the river, was the town planting ground.[2] At first light, the people of Wethersfield arrived to prepare their fields for the spring planting. Patiently, the Pequots waited for the English farmers to break into scattered work parties. Then, from behind trees and bushes, they sprang their ambush. The Indians caught the settlers completely off guard, killing six men, three women, and twenty cows.[3] They captured two young girls who were the daughters of William Swayne, one of Wethersfield's original settlers—the older of the two was sixteen.[4] With great speed, the Pequots headed back down the Connecticut River, carrying their captives and plunder.

Returning to their own country, in what is today New London County, the Pequot fleet approached Fort Saybrook at the mouth of the Connecticut River. The Pequots, as they passed the fort, taunted the Saybrook soldiers by displaying the spoils of their recent victory. Mocking the sails of the white man's ships, the Indians hoisted up poles strung with the clothes of their victims at Wethersfield.[5] Captain Lion Gardiner, commander at Saybrook, could plainly see the captured Swayne girls in one of the canoes. He noticed also that many of the Pequots were wearing white shirts taken from the settlers.[6] Angered, Gardiner ordered his cannon to fire at the Indians. When the first shot nearly hit the canoe that contained the Swayne sisters, Gardiner gave the order to cease fire. Unable to

stop the Pequots, the captain and his men watched helplessly as the Indians made their escape. Connecticut's Pequot War, the first real armed conflict between English colonists and natives in New England, had begun.

Although each side had accused the other of instigating the war, a military expedition sent from Massachusetts Bay Colony, under the command of Captain John Endicott, provoked the commencement of hostilities.[7] After Endicott burned a Pequot village and destroyed their crops, the Pequots, led by their grand sachem, Sassacus, decided to retaliate. First, they struck at the nearest English outpost, Fort Saybrook, and for months held the garrison under siege. Then, they attacked the settlement at Wethersfield and killed nine colonists. This raid shocked the people of Connecticut's river towns.

Convinced that their survival was at stake, Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield decided to act in concert to deal with the crisis. On May 1, 1637, a week after the raid on Wethersfield, the newly formed General Court of Connecticut declared war against the Pequots.[8] Deciding to strike at the Pequots in their own country, the new government raised an army of ninety men and placed it under the command of an experienced soldier, Captain John Mason. On May 26, Mason's army, guided by his Indian allies, the Narragansetts and the Mohegans, surprised the Pequots in one of their two stockaded villages, the weaker one along the Mystic River.[9] The English totally destroyed the encampment and killed approximately five hundred Indians, many of them old people, women, and children.[10] This slaughter completely demoralized the tribe. The Pequots burned their remaining village in what is today Groton, Connecticut, and fled along the coast to the west. While crossing the Connecticut River, they came upon three Englishmen in a boat and, in retribution for the massacre at Mystic, killed them and hung their bodies in a tree.[11]

Although there were no English settlements west of the Connecticut River at this time, the combined forces of the Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut colonies pursued the Pequots, determined to destroy them.[12] At a swamp in what is presently Southport, Connecticut, the English army surrounded the Pequots. On July 13, in a dense fog, the Pequots tried unsuccessfully to escape, and in the engagement that followed, the English inflicted some casualties and took many prisoners. Sassacus, accompanied by a high-ranking counsellor named Mononotto and a small group of warriors, escaped to New York, possibly to seek refuge among the powerful Mohawks.[13] But the Mohawks, traditional enemies of the New England tribes and allies of the English, attacked the band and killed Sassacus. The Pequots, formerly the most powerful tribe in Connecticut, were subjugated. Connecticut's brief but bloody Indian war was over.

The defeat of the Pequots greatly accelerated the settlement of Connecticut by the English. The colonists seized the Pequot lands in eastern Connecticut as the spoils of war.[14] During their pursuit of the Pequots, the English also became acquainted with the coastal region west of the Connecticut River. In July of 1637, an English military expedition under the command of Captain Israel Stoughton

of Massachusetts Bay Colony landed at what is today New Haven, Connecticut. Stoughton was favorably impressed with the harbor and its adjoining lands, and, thinking it an excellent place for a new settlement, he praised the area in a letter to the governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, Sr. It is believed that Governor Winthrop showed this letter to two recent arrivals to Boston, John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton.[15] Davenport and Eaton, who greatly desired to find a place to form a Puritan settlement of their own, were immediately interested.

In late August of 1637, not long after the hostilities of the Pequot War had ceased, Eaton led a small exploring party to the future site of New Haven. This location was then known by its Indian name, Quinnipiac, an Algonquian word meaning "the Long Water Place."[16] The name Quinnipiac was used not only in reference to the harbor and the surrounding region, but also to the principal river of the area that flowed into the Long Island Sound and to the tribe that were the land's original inhabitants. Eaton was pleased with the Long Water Place, and he made it a priority to establish friendly relations with the Quinnipiac Indians. When Eaton proposed his intention to build a town at Quinnipiac, the local Indians had no objection. Eaton returned to Boston to bring out the main body of the settlers in the spring. He left seven men to spend the winter at Quinnipiac under the command of Joshua Atwater. [17] The explorers were frequently visited by the Quinnipiac Indians, who aided the white men through the cold winter.[18]

On April 24, 1638, Eaton returned with approximately five hundred emigrants. Davenport and Eaton, the leaders of the new community, dreamed of turning the harbor at Quinnipiac into a great commercial port that would be the equal of Boston.[19] They also planned to govern their colony based on the tenets of the Old Testament.[20] Former state historian Albert Van Dusen wrote, "Puritans of the strictest and most doctrinaire type, the Davenport-Eaton Company devoutly desired to establish a Bible State in New England."[21]

Davenport and Eaton continued their friendly relations with the numerically weak Quinnipiac Indians. Momauguin, grand sachem of the Quinnipiacs, told Eaton that his tribe had been nearly obliterated by a terrible plague. He complained of being forced to pay "heavy taxes" to both the Pequots and the Mohawks.[22] For a period the Quinnipiacs had been forced to take up temporary residence near the English settlements along the Connecticut River.[23] Whether or not Momauguin fully realized that the Pequot threat had been completely eliminated is a matter of conjecture. Apparently, he still feared the Mohawks. In exchange for the protection that the Davenport-Eaton Company would provide for his people, Momauguin formally ceded his lands to the colonists on November 24, 1638. With only forty-six warriors in his band at the time he signed the treaty,[24] the grand sachem of the Quinnipiacs had no choice but to cooperate with the stronger newcomers. The Quinnipiac Indians never made war against their white neighbors.

The first year in the new land was an active one for the Davenport-Eaton group. The settlers had plenty of work ahead of them to transform the "wilderness" into a colonial settlement. They occupied themselves with surveying, laying out the boundaries of their central village, constructing comfortable homes, and planting their first crops. Then it was time to devote their attention to other equally important matters. On June 4, 1639, a meeting was held by the leaders to establish "their permanent religious and civil institutions."[25] First Church was founded on August 22 with John Davenport chosen as pastor.[26] A General Court was appointed to manage all civil affairs. Theophilus Eaton was selected as magistrate for a one-year term. Lieutenant Robert Seeley, one of the founders of Wethersfield and a veteran of the Pequot War who had recently moved to Quinnipiac, was appointed marshall. Biblical tradition would be the guiding force behind the new government's judicial decisions, as illustrated by this statement in the Town Records: "And that the word of God shall be the only rule to be attended into in ordering the affairs in this plantation."[27]

On October 26, the day after the official organization of the new state, two strange Indians came to the town to trade. One of the natives, carrying a deer's head on his back, was recognized as Nepaupuck, a suspected Pequot leader in the late war, who was believed "to have murderously shed the blood of some of the English."[28] Seeley, the newly appointed town marshall, hastily obtained a warrant and attempted to arrest Nepaupuck at the home of Theophilus Eaton. Aided by his unidentified Indian companion, Nepaupuck nearly escaped but was finally "pinioned" by Lieutenant Seeley, who placed him under arrest and threw him into the stocks. His Indian accomplice was severely whipped by Seeley's deputy marshall.[29]

After being confined for the night and the following day in the stocks, Nepaupuck was brought before Eaton, the town magistrate, on October 28. Eaton was assisted by his deputies, Robert Newman, Matthew Gilbert, Nathaniel Turner, and Thomas Fugill. Fugill served as secretary and kept a written record of the proceedings. The first official act of the new court was to try Nepaupuck for murder.[30] Curiously, there is no mention of an interpreter being present at the trial. Thomas Stanton and John Clarke had served as interpreters during the important treaty negotiations with the Indians in 1638, but neither of the two men is mentioned in connection with the Nepaupuck case.

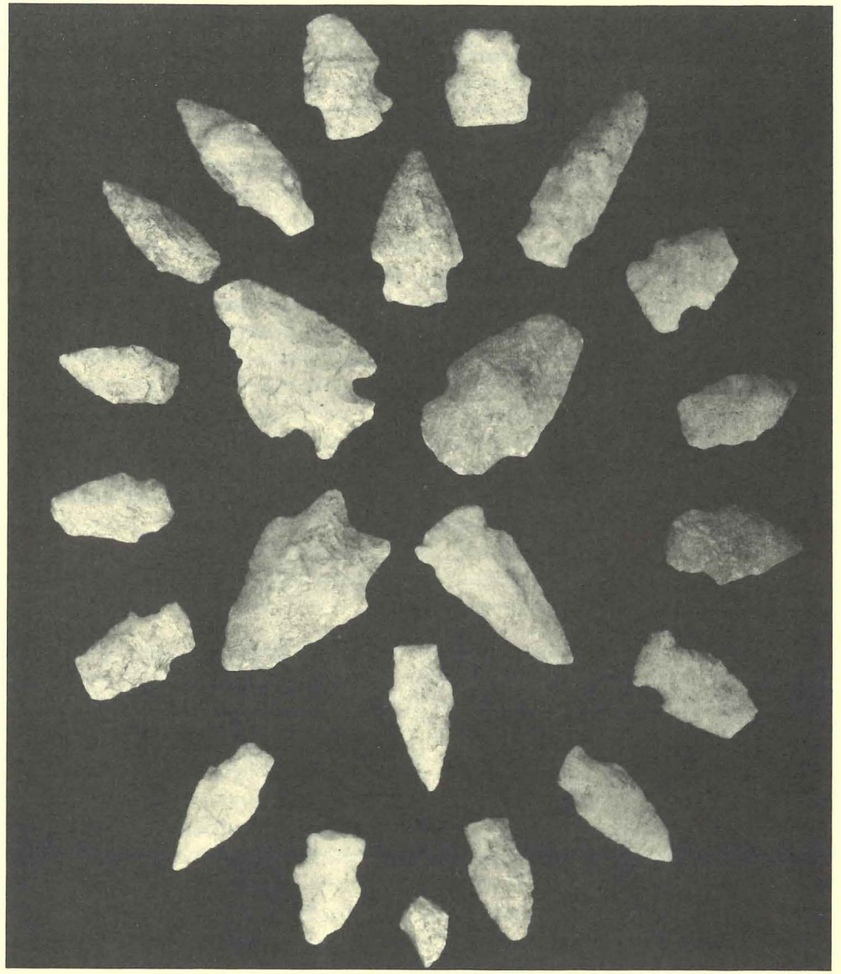
The trial began with the Eaton court asking the local natives what they knew concerning Nepaupuck. Momauguin and various members of the tribe testified that Nepaupuck was guilty of murdering more than one of the English and of cutting off the hands of his victims and presenting them as trophies to Sassacus.[31] Mewhebato, one of the Quinnipiacs who was said to be a relative of Nepaupuck, came forward to speak in his defense. According to the Town Records, Mewhebato initially denied any knowledge of Nepaupuck's crimes. But after "being severely admonished to speak the truth,"[32] Mewhebato, "in a trembling manner,"[33] concurred with the others that his kinsman was guilty.

The frightful slaughter of noncombatants at Mystic was harsh retribution indeed for the depredations committed by the Pequots at Saybrook and Wethersfield. Reproduced from *The Story of America in Pictures* by Alan C. Collins, Doubleday & Co., 1953.

After the Quinnipiacs were dismissed, Nepaupuck was brought in alone to face the court. Nepaupuck, known also by his alias, Messutunck,[34] startled the members of the court by proclaiming that an Indian named Nepaupuck was guilty of the murders, but that he, himself, was not Nepaupuck! Afraid that perhaps they were trying the wrong Indian, the court recalled Mewhebato to confront the prisoner. After expressing "some signs of sorrow,"[35] Mewhebato charged Nepaupuck to his face that he had "assisted the Pequots in murdering the English."[36] The next witness for the prosecution was Watoone, Son of Carroughgood, one of Momauguin's counsellors. Watoone specifically stated that he had stood upon an island in the Connecticut River at Wethersfield and had seen Nepaupuck kill Abraham Finch. Momauguin and the rest of the Quinnipiacs were then recalled. They confirmed that the accused was Nepaupuck and that he was guilty of committing various war crimes. At this point in the trial, according to the records, Nepaupuck, overwhelmed by the evidence against him, confessed that he was indeed Nepaupuck, and he "boasted that he was a great Captain and had murdered Abraham Finch and had his hands in other English blood."[37] Nepaupuck said that he knew he must die and that he was not afraid of it, "but layed his neck to the mantel tree of the chimney, desiring that his head might be cut off or that he might die in any other manner the English should appoint."[38] This dramatic confession concluded the court's proceedings for the day. Nepaupuck was returned to the stocks and a guard stood watch over him.[39]

The General Court was assembled on the next day, October 29, to reach a verdict in the Nepaupuck case. When the prisoner was brought before the bar, he insisted again that he was not Nepaupuck. Watoone, the star witness for the prosecution, testified that Nepaupuck not only had murdered Abraham Finch, Jr., but also had abducted one of the daughters of William Swayne.[40] Kidnapping was not the only new charge brought against Nepaupuck. Watoone further accused him of participating in the killing of three Englishmen on the Connecticut River.[41] Momauguin and his tribesmen were asked again to confront Nepaupuck with his crimes. Faced with these new charges brought by his Indian enemies, Nepaupuck once more confessed his guilt but with the curious statement that "there was a Mohawk of that name [Nepaupuck] who had killed more than he."[42] The General Court, believing that there was sufficient proof of the prisoner's guilt, ruled that "he that shed man's blood by man, shall his blood be shed."[43] When told that he had been sentenced to death, Nepaupuck replied, "It is *weregin* [well, fine]."[44] The final entry in the records tells of his fate: "Accordingly his head was cut off the next day [October 30] and pitched upon a pole in the marketplace."[45]

One historian has written that Nepaupuck was the only man ever to have been executed on the New Haven Green,[46] then known as the marketplace. New Haven historian Rollin Osterweis has, however, pointed out that the Town Records do not give the details.[47] Nepaupuck was not the only Native American



Local Indian projectile points from the papers of Charles Hervey Townshend, author of *The Quinnipiack Indians and Their Reservation* (1900) in the *Townshend Family Collection* of the Whitney Library.

to be executed in New Haven. In 1644, an Indian named Busheage was decapitated for assaulting a woman in her home in Stamford.[48]

The gruesome custom of beheading one's enemies was common to both the English and the Indians.[49] After the decapitation of Nepaupuck, his head was publicly displayed "as a grisly lesson to his brother aborigines."[50] For whom was this warning intended? From the start, the Quinnipiac Indians proved to be faithful allies of the English. Still, there was always the grim possibility that the local Indians might form an alliance with a hostile tribe from the north.[51] The Quinnipiacs were repeatedly warned not to welcome any "strange" Indians to town.[52] During the summer of 1639, a few months before Nepaupuck made his fateful appearance at Quinnipiac, rumors were circulating throughout Connecticut that the Wangunks of Mattabasec (Middletown) were secretly harboring fugitive Pequots.[53] The General Court of Connecticut contemplated taking military action against the Wangunk sachem, Sowheag.[54] Sowheag's Wangunks were closely related to the Quinnipiac Indians,[55] a fact that may have made the whites at Quinnipiac uneasy.

Although Nepaupuck is believed to have been a Pequot, the record of the trial is vague as to his tribal identity. One writer has suggested that Nepaupuck was a Quinnipiac, "the one patriot of their band who fought for his race."[56] At this late date it is difficult to determine his tribal affiliation. If he was not a "brave Pequot Chieftain,"[57] he was most definitely a Pequot sympathizer. By his own admission, he did kill "one or more of the English." John DeForest, in his *the History of the Indians of Connecticut* (1851), wrote,

> Thus, for having fought bravely and with effect against the open enemies of his nation, a free Pequot Chieftain suffered the ignominious death of a malefactor. . . . It is probable that he looked upon his own execution, not as a judicial act, such as the English were anxious to have it considered, but merely as an act of vengeance, such as his own people were accustomed to take upon their enemies.[58]

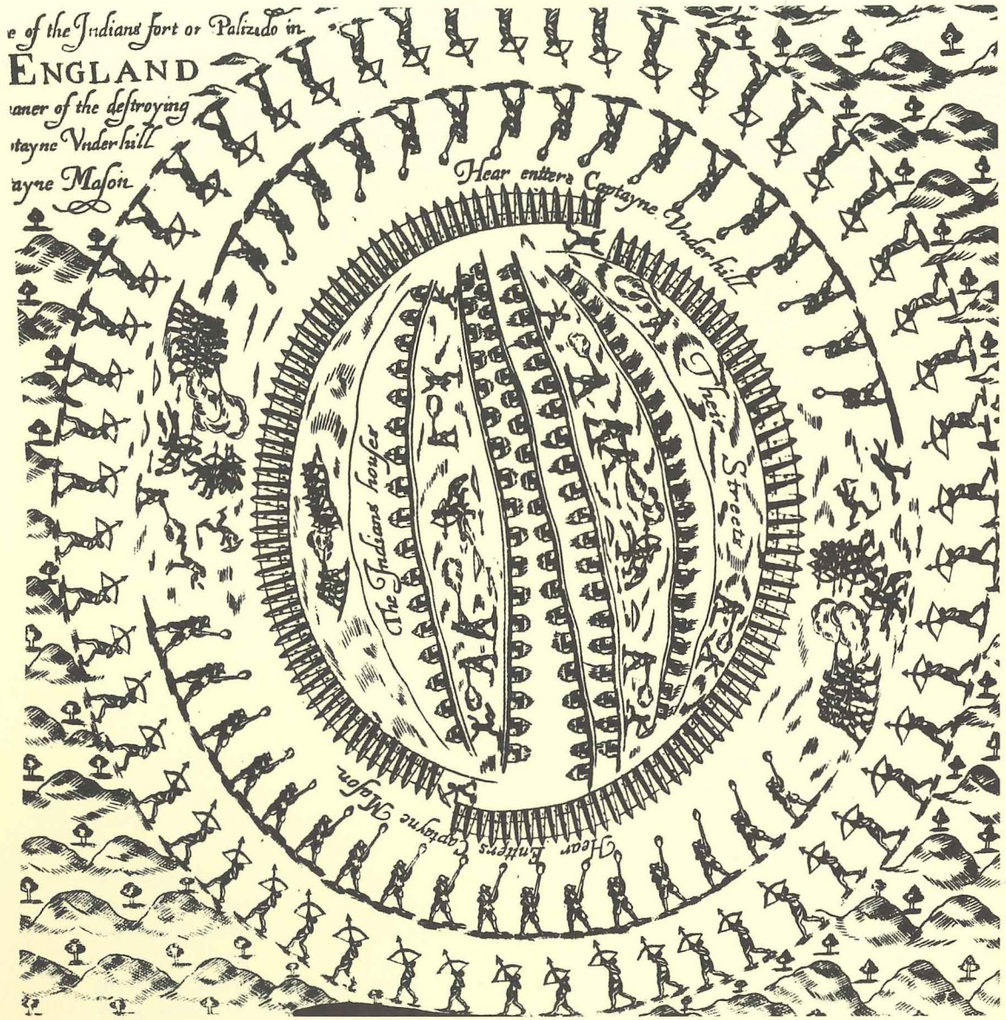
During the course of the Nepaupuck trial, the Eaton court carefully interviewed the various witnesses more than once. Secretary Thomas Fugill dutifully recorded the proceedings. Still, John DeForest was not far off the mark when he wrote in 1851 that the trial "was a mere farce, a nothing."[59] It is doubtful that the General Court at Quinnipiac had a legitimate right to try Nepaupuck for murder. Nepaupuck was a native, not an Englishman; that he should have been subjected to the white man's law is debatable. The crimes supposedly committed by Nepaupuck occurred outside the jurisdiction of the Davenport-Eaton Company and before the English settlement at Quinnipiac was in existence.[60] Nepaupuck should have appeared before the General Court of Connecticut, as it was the river towns who had been at war with the Pequots. In 1639, the town government at Quinnipiac was of dubious legal status. The Davenport-Eaton Company, lacking

a charter from the king of England, were, in reality, squatters living in a land where the original inhabitants, the Quinnipiac Indians, were too feeble to be anything but compliant. New Haven historian Isabel M. Calder wrote, "The Davenport Company was without a patent from the Crown upon which to base a claim to their territory. . . . Meanwhile, they remedied their lack of title as best they could by acquiring the Indian rights to the soil."[61]

Nepaupuck was found guilty due to the testimony of the Quinnipiac Indians. Mewhebato was supposed to speak on the prisoner's behalf and was the only witness to do so. His statement that Nepaupuck had "assisted the Pequots in murdering the English" hardly benefitted Nepaupuck's case. Watoone's testimony was the most damaging.The main charge against Nepaupuck was the murder of Abraham Finch, Jr., of Wethersfield. This killing happened, however, during an act of war, when the Pequots raided Wethersfield on April 23, 1637, a fact sometimes overlooked by historians. Watoone, who was living in the Wethersfield area at the time, testified that he had stood on the island from which the Pequots launched their attack and watched Nepaupuck kill Finch. Due to an absence of Wethersfield Town Records pertaining to this period,[62] only two of the nine victims of the Wethersfield raid have been positively identified. One was the third daughter of William Swayne, whose name has been lost to history, and the other, Abraham Finch, Jr. Only two of the two hundred Indians in the raiding party have been identified by name. An Indian named Odoqueminon was said to have killed the Swayne girl,[63] while Nepaupuck, according to Watoone, aided in the abduction of the two remaining Swayne sisters. The record of the trial is not clear on whether or not Watoone actually saw the kidnapping take place. Watoone also implicated Nepaupuck in the killing of three Englishmen on the Connecticut River, which occurred after Captain Mason's victory on May 26 had forced the Pequots to abandon their homeland. Since the incident on the Connecticut River took place along the coast far to the south of Wethersfield, it is unlikely that Watoone witnessed it.

The Davenport-Eaton Company, due to their peaceful relations with the Quinnipiacs, were viewed throughout New England as being fair and just in their relations with the natives.[64] The speedy trial and execution of Nepaupuck was, however, considered unduly harsh by the historian John DeForest, who wrote, "The colony of New Haven, remarkable for never having had a quarrel with the aborigines in its vicinity, sullied its fair fame by apprehending Nepaupuck, a brave Pequot Chieftain, as a criminal, and executing him as a murderer."[65]

In an effort to understand why Eaton and his deputies acted as they did in the Nepaupuck case, one must realize, that, even in 1639, the English were determined to keep the Pequots subjugated. The Pequot raid on Wethersfield in 1637 has traditionally been cited by most historians as the catalyst that motivated the General Court of Connecticut to wage a brutal and relentless offensive war against the ferocious Pequots.[66] Upon closely examining the events of the war,



After setting Mystic Fort on fire, the forces of Mason and Underhill formed a ring around the burning stockade and shot any of the Pequots who tried to escape. This diagram was originally printed in Captain John Underhill's account, *News from America (1638).*

one finds, however, some difficulties with this interpretation. The English first attacked the Pequots in their own country in late August of 1636. The Indians, instead of striking at the vulnerable white settlements along the Connecticut River, contented themselves with harassing Lion Gardiner's fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River. Sassacus, Mononotto, and the other Pequot sachems were engaged in a futile attempt to form an alliance with their old enemies, the powerful Narragansett Indians of Rhode Island.[67] Sassacus was aware that he needed strong allies to contend with the better armed Englishmen.

The Pequots hesitated nearly a year before they attacked the settlers along the Connecticut River. In early 1637, an incident at Wethersfield inspired Sassacus to finally strike at the town. A quarrel had developed, possibly over a land dispute, between Sowheag, sachem of the Wangunks, and the Wethersfield settlers. When Sowheag erected a wigwam in Wethersfield, he was promptly driven out by the settlers.[68] This embittered Sowheag, who, in 1633, had warmly welcomed John Oldham, the first English visitor to the region, [69] and provided him with gifts of furs and hemp.[70] Consequently, Sowheag had encouraged the emigration of Oldham and a group of settlers from Watertown, Massachusetts, to Wethersfield, then known by its Indian name Pyquag, in 1634. The following year, Sowheag signed a pact with the Wethersfield people that allowed him to remain in the area and to receive protection from the settlers.[71] Two years later, the whites violated this pact and forced Sowheag to flee to Mattabasec. Furious, the Wangunk sachem turned to his old enemies, the Pequots, for justice. On April 23, 1637, the Pequots responded and attacked the Wethersfield settlers.

A year after the Pequot War had ended, there was much bitter feeling among the Wethersfield people toward Sowheag.[72] The General Court of Connecticut investigated the matter and consulted with the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Both courts concluded that the Wethersfield people were to blame for their difficulties with Sowheag because they had first broken their pact with him.[73] In April of 1638, the courts ruled in favor of the Wangunk sachem, who was allowed to return to Wethersfield.[74] Sowheag, however, continued to remain troublesome for the General Court of Connecticut. The following year, he was suspected of sheltering Pequots at Mattabasec.

Regardless of the circumstances that led to the Wethersfield raid, the result was that Connecticut speedily mobilized for offensive war. Captain Mason's massacre of five hundred Indians, many of them noncombatants, was harsh retribution for the small number of white people killed by the Pequots at Gardiner's fort and in the Wethersfield raid. One band of Pequots refused to flee westward after the Mystic disaster and tried to hide in a nearby swamp called Cuppacommock (the Hiding Place).[75] The English army, aided by their Indian allies, captured this band and executed the men, thirty in number, and dumped their bodies into the Long Island Sound.[76] The captured women and children were sold into slavery to various families throughout New England.[77] After the final battle of the war, some of the captives were shipped off to the West Indies to

be sold into slavery.[78] On September 21, 1638, a peace treaty was signed in which the Pequots formally ceased to exist as a tribe.[79] Those who had survived the war and had not been enslaved were divided up among the Indian allies of the English, the Narragansetts and the Mohegans. The former followers of Sassacus were forbidden to refer to themselves as Pequots. Nor were they allowed to return to their tribal lands. Not until seventeen years later, in 1655, did the English allow the Pequots to regroup under their old tribal name and to choose their own leaders.[80]

In retrospect, the strange case of Nepaupuck was indicative of how badly the English wished to keep the once free and powerful Pequots a totally conquered people. Whether Nepaupuck was a brave warrior or a murderous war criminal depends on one's point of view. Both the Pequot War and the trial of Nepaupuck grimly foreshadowed some dark days to come between the English and the natives in New England. The Puritan colonists persisted in forcing their culture, religion, and legal system upon the Indians. That this was a dangerous policy indeed is best illustrated by a controversial murder trial that took place in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1675. When Plymouth Colony convicted and executed three Wampanoag Indians, their sachem, Metacomet, known to the English as King Philip, was unable to restrain his angry warriors, who retaliated against the whites at Swansea, Massachusetts.[81] These events led to the outbreak of King Philip's War, the most tragic and costly disaster ever to fall upon New England. A few days before the fighting began, Metacomet met with a friendly Rhode Islander named John Easton. The Wampanoag leader bitterly listed his grievances against the whites, one being that his people felt they could find no justice in the English courts.[82]

JOHN MENTA, a native New Havener, is a graduate student in history. He is currently researching the history of the Quinnipiac Indians for his master's thesis. "The Strange Case of Nepaupuck: Warrior or War Criminal?" was awarded first prize in the R. W. Phipps essay contest in 1986.

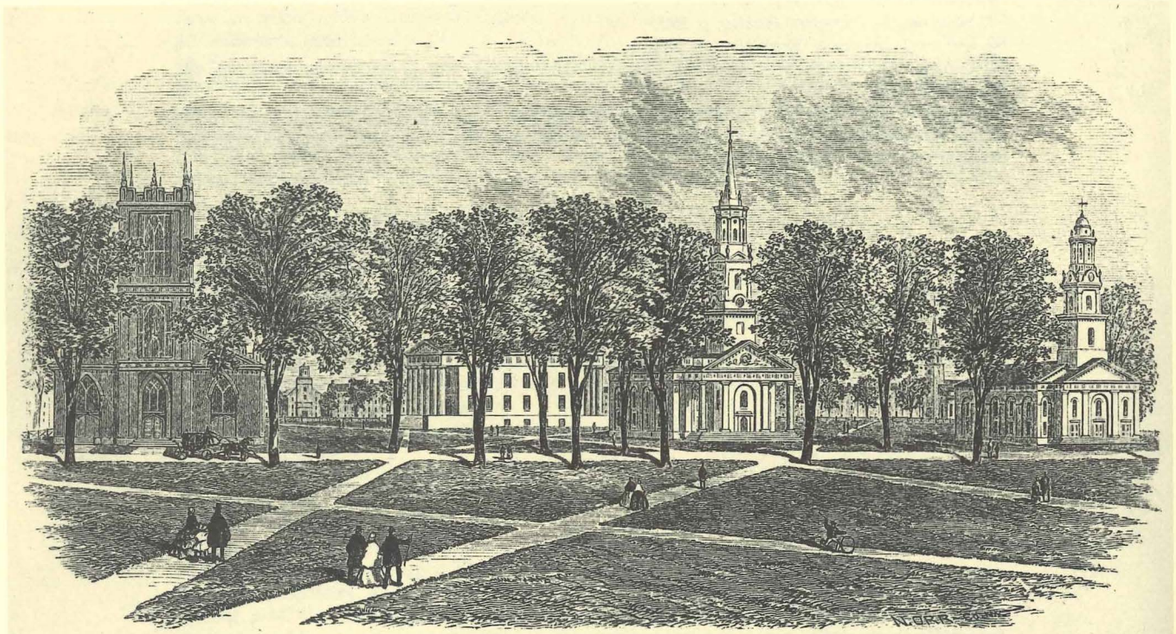
NOTES

1. Frances Wells Fox and Jared Butler Standish, *Wethersfield and her Daughters, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Newington from 1634 to 1934* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood, and Brainard, 1934), p. 13.
2. Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles, *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut, vol.* 1 (New York: The Grafton Press, 1904), p. 62.
3. Adams and Stiles, *Ancient Wethersfield*, p. 63. Thomas Hooker, in a letter to Governor John Winthrop, criticized the settlers for sending out the women and children without any guards.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
6. Ibid., p. 64.

7. Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* (New York-London: W. W. Norton, 1979), pp. 136-37. Vaughan is generally considered to be pro-Puritan in his writings.
8. Albert Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 36.
9. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 218-20.
10. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, p. 145. Pequot casualties at Mystic are variously estimated at between three hundred and seven hundred dead.
11. John W. DeForest, *History of the Indians of Connecticut* (Hartford: Wm. Jas. Hamersley, 1851), p. 142.
12. Ibid., p. 144.
13. Benjamin Trumbull, D.D., *A Complete History of Connecticut Volume 1 New Haven* (Maltby, Goldsmith and Company and Samuel Wadsworth, 1818; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 92. Mononotto's fate is unknown. Trumbull says he was wounded by the Mohawks but managed to escape.
14. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, p. 152.
15. Sarah Day Woodward, *Early New Haven* (New Haven: Edward P. Judd, 1929), pp. 4-5.
16. Charles Hervey Townshend, *The Quinnipiack Indians and Their Reservation* (New Haven Colony Historical Society, Press of Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor, 1900), p. 9. There are various spellings of *Quinnipiac:* Quillipiac, Quiripey, Quinnipeauke, Quinneypyooghg. The accepted spelling today is Quinnipiac.
17. Woodward, *Early New Haven*, p. 6.
18. Ibid., p. 8.
19. Floyd M. Shumway, "The Urban World as New Haven's Founders Knew It," *Journal of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* 31, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 17.
20. Rollin G. Osterweis, *Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 16-17.
21. Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, p. 49.
22. Townshend, *Quinnipiack Indians*, p. 22. Indian Deeds or Treaties of the Plantation of New Haven, November 24, 1638. Reprinted in Townshend.
23. Ibid., p. 11.
24. Ibid. Augmented by the bands of Montowese and Shaumpishuh, the total amount of Quinnipiac males was about seventy.
25. Osterweis, *New Haven*, p. 14.
26. Ibid., p. 15.
27. Ibid., p. 16.
28. Charles J. Hoadly, *New Haven Colonial Records 1638-1649* (Case, Tiffany, 1857), p. 22.
29. Ibid.
30. Osterweis, *New Haven*, p. 18.
31. Hoadly, *New Haven Records*, p. 23.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p. 22. It was not unusual for an Indian to have more than one name.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. This statement has made me wonder whether Nepaupuck was a Pequot by birth or merely a sympathizer.
37. Ibid., p. 23.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 24.
41. Ibid., p. 23.
42. Ibid. The Mohawks were usually on friendly terms with the English.
43. Ibid., p. 24.

44. Ibid. The bravery displayed by Nepaupuck when sentenced to death by the General Court has made an impression on many writers of local history, including John DeForest, Rachel M. Hartley, and John H. Dickerman.
45. Ibid.
46. Rachel M. Hartley, *The History of Hamden, Connecticut 1786-1936* (Hamden, Connecticut: Quinnipiac Press, 1943), p. 13. The author put the date of the execution in 1638. She noted that Nepaupuck faced his death "with a remarkable dignity."
47. Osterweis, *New Haven*, p. 19.
48. Trumbull, *Connecticut*, p. 143. Trumbull described the execution: "The executioner cut off his head with a falchion but it was cruelly done. He gave the Indian eight blows before he effected the execution. The Indian sat erect and motionless, until his head was severed from his body." Stamford was under the jurisdiction of New Haven Colony in 1644. Busheage had been arrested and thrown into prison. Somehow, he managed to escape. He was recaptured and turned over to the English by a Potatuck Indian named Wuchebrough (Hoadly, *New Haven Records*, p. 146). The record of this trial is lost.
49. Jennings, *Invasion*, p. 166.
50. Osterweis, *New Haven*, p. 19.
51. Woodward, *Early New Haven*, p. 39.
52. Townshend, *Quinnipiac Indians*, p. 24.
53. Isabel M. Calder, *The New Haven Colony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 177-78.
54. Ibid.
55. Samuel Orcutt, *The Indians of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Valleys* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1882; repr. John E. Edwards, 1972), p. 9. Montowese, leader of the Northern Quinnipiacs, is said to be Sowheag's son or nephew.
56. John H. Dickerman, *Colonial History of the Parish of Mount Carmel* (New Haven: Ryder's Printing House, 1904), p. 24.
57. DeForest, *Indians of Connecticut*, p. 172.
58. Ibid., p. 175.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. 174.
61. Calder, *New Haven Colony*, p. 52.
62. Adams and Stiles, *Ancient Wethersfield*, p. 38.
63. Ibid, p. 67. The remaining two sisters were soon rescued by the Dutch. When the Pequots realized the Swayne sisters could not make gun powder, they lost interest in them. They were well treated during their brief captivity, thanks to the wife of Mononotto, a woman according to Governor John Winthrop "of very modest countenance and behavior."
64. Osterweis, *New Haven*, p. 11.
65. DeForest, *Connecticut Indians*, p. 172. DeForest wrote that Nepaupuck had "fought gallantly in the late war."
66. Van Dusen, *Connecticut*, p. 36.
67. Jennings, *Invasion*, p. 213. The efforts of Roger Williams and the hostility of the Narragansetts toward the Pequots doomed any chance of a Pequot-Narragansett alliance. Such an alliance would have been a serious threat to the English in New England in 1637.
68. Adams and Stiles, *Ancient Wethersfield*, p. 69.
69. Wells and Standish, *Wethersfield and Her Daughters*, p. 9. Oldham was killed in 1636 by the Manises, the Block Island Indians. The Pequots were falsely blamed for his murder.
70. Ibid. p. 9.
71. Adams and Stiles, *Ancient Wethersfield*, p. 69.
72. Ibid., p. 68.
73. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
74. Ibid., p. 69.

75. Eva L. Butler, "Local Indian Lore," A Bicentennial Project of the Indian and Colonial Research Center, Inc. Manuscript, Old Mystic, Connecticut, p. 9.
76. Jennings, *Invasion*, p. 226.
77. DeForest, *Indians of Connecticut*, p. 143. Little has been written about the enslavement of Native Americans in early colonial times.
78. Trumbull, *Connecticut*, p. 92.
79. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, p. 150.
80. DeForest, *Indians of Connecticut*, p. 248.
81. Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk—New England in King Philip's War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958), p. 36.
82. George W. Ellis and John E. Morris, *King Philip's War* (New York: The Grafton Press, 1906), p. 51. Easton was the deputy governor of Rhode Island who tried futilely to mediate a peace between the Wampanoags and Plymouth Colony.



View of New Haven Green, 1860. Engraving by N. Orr Co., New York. *Courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

The Three Churches on the Green

by Calvert D. Morgan, Jr.

Three churches stand today on the New Haven Green.

There they have stood since the War of 1812, elegant, permanent. Though details have been altered—towers removed and rebuilt, brick painted and sandblasted, windows donated and removed—these three houses of worship have retained the same majestic aspect they held at their completion. At the center of the Green, at the center of the Nine Squares, at the center of the city itself, they are New Haven's most familiar scene; more painted, lithographed, and photographed than any other New Haven view, these final structures on New Haven's public square stand as much for the history and the diversity of the community as they do for its Puritanism or its religious heritage.

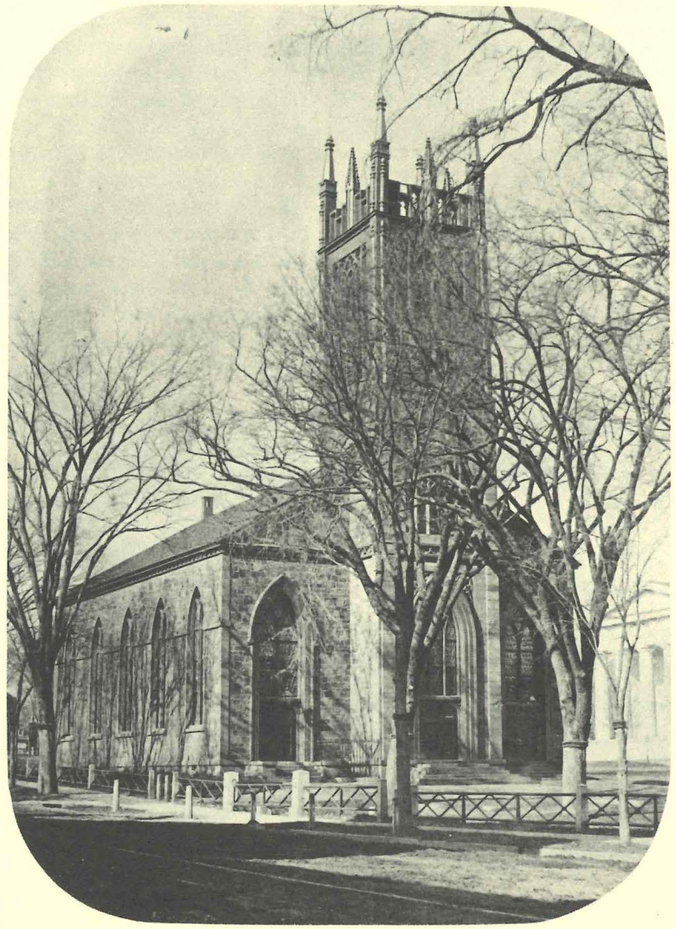
Yet, surprisingly, most people know little of the story of the erection of Trinity, Center, and North churches in the period between 1812 and 1815; worse yet, the full story of the simultaneous construction of these three splendid buildings seems lost to history. As New Haven architectural historian Elizabeth Mills Brown has put it, "Large designs as well composed as this don't just happen";[1] it seems almost impossible that such a grand plan could have been undertaken so successfully without some formal cooperation among the three religious societies, the city, and the proprietors of the New Haven Green. Yet there is, in fact, little record of any communication among these groups on the matter; to understand what we can of the circumstances surrounding their construction, we are forced to examine the fragmentary story that has descended to us—a story that hints more at coincidence than at either competition or cooperation.

Before 1810, the New Haven Green had served a variety of purposes; beginning life as a marketplace, it retained that name and much of the character of a community open market through most of the eighteenth century. Yet the Green, as it came to be called in the last quarter of that century, had always been

intended "not as a park or mere pleasure ground, but as a place for public buildings, for military parades and exercises, for the meeting of buyers and sellers, for the concourse of the people";[2] and by the turn of the nineteenth century the town had begun to take that intention to heart. A general, though informal, movement to clean up the Green took hold: within a few years, the old Litchfield road was removed, several outdated small buildings were taken down, and in 1800 a wooden fence was erected around the square. Though the eastern half of the Green would remain "more or less boggy"[3] until some land-leveling was performed later in the nineteenth century, and though cows would continue to graze the land of the Green until they were banned in 1821, the square had taken on an undeniably more ordered aspect. By 1810, only three major buildings remained on the tract: the Third Meeting House of the First Ecclesiastical Society, the second, or "Brick," State House, and the meetinghouse of the Fair Haven Society. These were possibly the three most important buildings in the town; rid of the clutter of grammar schools and jails which had littered it before, the Green had begun to assume the dignified aspect of an emerging public center.

Yet by 1810—the first year any new church-building in New Haven in this era is mentioned—a number of changes were beginning to demand attention. The buildings on the Green had become outdated; the problem was especially pressing in the churches, which were both wearying and becoming increasingly overcrowded. The First Church meetinghouse had been in service since 1756, twenty years before the Revolution; its quarters had doubtless become cramped long before 1810. The problem was more acute in the case of the Fair Haven meetinghouse; the union of the Fair Haven and White Haven societies in 1796 had forced its merged membership to worship in the Fair Haven and White Haven houses on alternate months, an impractical and taxing arrangement. The demands of overpopulation and religious decentralization thus dictated the need for improved worshipping conditions in both of the city's Congregational societies.

More striking, however, were the changes in American churchbuilding fashion in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, changes that rendered both of New Haven's Congregational meetinghouses architecturally obsolete. The style throughout the 1700s had been to construct churches "somewhat in the form of a very big house, with a tower when they could afford it stuck on one end."[4] Both the Third Meeting House and the Fair Haven meetinghouse had conformed to this plan, which placed the main door to the church in the center of a long wall as if it were the front door of a house. Yet by the turn of the century, a new style of church architecture had come into vogue: inspired by the work of Charles Bulfinch in Massachusetts, it moved the main doors of the building to the tower end, creating an impressive facade and a sense of direction throughout the building that had been absent in the earlier style. This new, dramatic fashion had had its most recent and eloquent expression in the First Congregational Church



Trinity Episcopal Church, c. 1890. *Photo courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

View of Center Church (left) and United Church, New Haven, c. 1920. *Photo courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

in Hartford (1807). New Haven, by this time cocapital with Hartford of the State of Connecticut, found itself burdened with a pair of antiquated meetinghouses in a new era of grand churches.

Yet these two societies were not the only two religious groups in New Haven; and, indeed, it was another church, just across the street, that would first propose the building of a new church in this period—a building that would eventually complete the triad on the Green. Trinity Parish, New Haven's first Episcopal church, was younger than either of the Congregational societies and had never had a building on the Green. It had hardly even been a society until 1752, when it constructed its own small house of worship on the east side of Church Street near Chapel.[5] Yet the Trinitarians had swelled in number since that time; and, though still "the smallest Society in . . . town"[6] in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, by 1810 they were beginning to feel as cramped in their tiny church as the city's Congregationalists.

Thus, on October 20, 1810, at the residence of John Jacocks, the vestry of Trinity Church "conversed upon the subject of building in a new church."[7] It was not immediately decided that the new building would be erected on the Green; and, though the idea may have been brimming in the minds of the members of the committee appointed at that meeting, there is no indication that Trinity ever imagined it might secure a place alongside the two most prominent societies in the city. Yet this is the first expression of interest in the building of a new church in the period after the turn of the century, and after the invigorating display in Hartford three years before.

Meanwhile, however, the same stirrings were occurring within the two Congregational societies of New Haven; and, though it took two more years, by January 23, 1812, the "third society of White Haven and Fair Haven" had announced publicly that "those persons who are desirous of aiding in the erection of a NEW MEETING HOUSE"[8] might meet to discuss such a matter in the old colonial State House. A similar meeting may well have taken place among the members of the First Society; by November 12 of that year, a proposal for a new meetinghouse for their society had been made and accepted by its members.[9] In December a similar agreement was reached by the Fair Haven-White Haven Society; and, in an affirmation of their growing place of respect in the city, the Trinity Parish in that same month—"though not without difficulty"[10]—secured a site on the Green alongside its Congregationalist colleagues. The triad had been established.

Yet the construction of a church was no inexpensive matter; and it would certainly have been impossible for a religious society to finance such an undertaking through donations. A clever method was used to subsidize construction, one that had been used in 1764 to finance the remodeling of the White Haven church.[11] The First and White Haven-Fair Haven societies sold their pews at public auction in the fall of 1814 and the early winter of 1815 respectively; Trinity Parish, balking at the idea of private ownership of "any part of a consecrated building,"[12] compromised and leased its pews in the same manner for a period of

five years. The sale of pews apparently failed to cover *in toto* the building expenses of the First Society, falling about a thousand dollars below the final cost of $34,323.46;[13] yet it eventually paid Trinity's costs, and netted the North Church society, as it was known for a while, a surplus of over $5,000.[14] This method of subscription would later cause the churches some consternation, as they attempted to recollect their pews; yet at that time it appeared the only feasible way to underwrite such a project.

The management of the construction of the new structures was undertaken in each case by a committee, about whose nomenclature much has been made. The First Society called their committee a syndicate;[15] but Charles W. Whittlesey in his tale of *The Fourth Meeting House* dubs them "contractors,"[16] a term with which Mary Hewitt Mitchell concurs in her *History of the United Church of New Haven*.[17] Yet *contractors*, in light of its present meaning, is a misleading term; what the societies building on the Green had in these groups were actually management commissions who both handled the sale of the pews and contracted out—hence the confusion—to architects or builders for the construction of the buildings. With the exception of Ebenezer Johnson, a member of the North Church committee who had some hand in the making of the final plans for that edifice, these groups are better described by the term Elizabeth Mills Brown uses for them: building committees.[18]

And it is with the formation of these building committees that our story changes focus, from the speculative to the concrete, from the limits of financial possibility to the realm of architectural imagination. By the end of 1813, every important roadblock had been cleared: every church had been given a site on the Green, every committee had been established, and the beginnings of the plans for financing the constructions were under way. It is at this point, when the plans of each society are beginning to take form, that we may begin to consider the actual physical construction of the three churches, the razing of the old structures and the raising of the new.

Mary Hewitt Mitchell's excellent history of the United Church records the diary entry of Rev. Thomas Robbins for one day in March 1813: "The people of New Haven have taken down their two meeting houses on the Green. The spirit appears a little trifling."[19] New Haven waited eagerly for the new churches, new companions for the old State House which still stood; it probably got little indication of what would come to fill the gaps in the Green until 1814, when the Center Church was taking shape, North Church was following close behind, and the cornerstone for the promising new Trinity Church was finally laid in May. In fact, the only indications the public may have had of the appearance of the new buildings were probably the specifications of site for their construction, which would indicate the direction they were all to assume: facing east, fronting the recently opened Temple Street. And, by the same token, these were the only specifications the building committees had to work with; given an open green and a clean slate, they turned out to the world to find men to design and construct the new structures.

Befitting tradition, it seems to have been the First Society that moved first. It is likely that some excavation occurred at the site as early as November or December of 1812; but no work on the building could have been performed before the first months of 1813, for not until February of that year was the first contract between a building committee and a builder signed. The First Society chose as its builder Isaac Damon, whose extravagant church in Northampton, Massachusetts, had attracted their attention.[20] But Damon appears to have turned over the project early on to a colleague, Ithiel Town—thus giving birth to a relationship between Town and New Haven that would produce some of the city's most distinguished buildings.

Town, however, had simply been signed on as the builder of the new church; and, as the research of architectural historian J. Frederick Kelley has shown, it is likely that the plan on which Center Church was based was derived from a set of standard church-building guidelines purchased through the mail from the influential architect Asher Benjamin for $40.[21] St. Martin-in-the-Fields in England is the ultimate design from which that plan is usually said to have been derived, and the ornate balustrade on the New Haven church seems to confirm this. Yet Ithiel Town, as he would prove a year later with the erection of Trinity Church next door, had a great deal more architectural talent than the average nineteenth-century builder; by his thirtieth birthday in 1814 he had almost certainly cultivated an eye for design and for the kind of personalized embellishment that would become the distinguishing marks of both a church and its designer. Thus it is that "Town supporters feel sure that he changed them [Benjamin's plans] in some significant way";[22] it is both nostalgically undesirable and, more important, architecturally and historically improbable, that Town committed Benjamin's plan to brick and mortar without adding his own personal touches.

And, if attributable in any way to Ithiel Town, the Center Church on the Green is a fine tribute to his early design abilities. The first of the three churches to rise before the eyes of the New Haven public in the years 1813 and 1814, it is a splendid adaptation of the new style pioneered by Bulfinch, and in fact a better rendition than the earlier Hartford model. The Center Church, which rose in 1814 and stands unchanged today, is a majestic design; though compared unfavorably in recent years with Ebenezer Johnson's cleaner North Church, it commands a presence essential to the church at the center of the city. Its powerful portico, with its wide, solid columns, establishes the stability of the edifice; its tall, elegant spire is beautifully proportioned and tastefully ornamented. Though controversial at the time for its "bucrania" (the carved ox skulls which ring the portico), frilly pediment decoration, and other "heathen" detail,[23] its overall design is a worthy monument to the Ecclesiastic Society that founded the town.

A number of stories of varying importance surround the building of Center Church; one of the more fascinating concerns the method by which the enormous spire was erected. Oscar E. Maurer's history of the First Church of New

Haven, *A Puritan Church* (1938), records that "a passage in [Ithiel Town's] diary stating that the wooden steeple was erected inside the brick tower and then hoisted into position has recently been found by Mr. George Dudley Seymour";[24] Edmund Sinnott relegates this "discovery" to the status of a "tradition," conceding that such an achievement was "a remarkable feat of engineering, if it was so done."[25] Another, more easily verifiable story concerns the building committee's report to the society as a whole, which predicted that the church "would probably not last more than one hundred and twenty-five years."[26] This is the kind of story gentle historians like to tell: quaint, tinged with soft irony, it combines a wink at the naivete of the past with a nod to the unwitting talent of our fathers.

A more controversial matter, though, threatened to halt indefinitely the construction of the Fourth Meeting House in 1813, a matter which was quickly or easily settled. The proposed and approved site of the new edifice was slated to cover a part of the old public burial ground on the Green, use of which had fallen off since the end of the last century and was now being transferred to the new Grove Street Cemetery. The new site of the meetinghouse had been determined by the County Court; yet in March of 1813

> a protest was adopted, signed by one hundred and seventy-eight subscribers, and resolutions passed vigorously denouncing the proposed location of the building. The construction was nevertheless commenced, but when the workmen began to excavate the trenches, a number of persons assembled with shovels and began to throw back the earth as soon as it was thrown out.[27]

The problem was cleared up by mid-1813; but nothing was resolved before the society was forced in May to call a meeting "for the purpose of conciliating the differences now subsisting relative to the location of the meetinghouse."[28] Only with the establishment of a crypt beneath the church to hold the remains of those displaced by the new edifice was the resentment of the community completely allayed.

Yet the attention of the New Haven community during 1813 could not possibly have dwelled long on the remains of the long-dead in the Green; for by that year the United States was in the depths of a long and tedious war with Britain, a war which doubtless occupied their minds as directly as any matters of reburial or new construction. The Connecticut newspapers of the time are filled with reports of the war, "late and important" news for which the editors, by their own discretion, were often forced to make room by dropping items of local interest. Only occasionally, through the odd advertisement or notice in the New Haven section of a paper such as the *Connecticut Journal*, do we hear news of the erection of what would soon become known as the North Church.

Construction on the North Church, which would later assume the name of the United Church on the Green, was begun in 1813, although, as with the Center Church, the exact date is not known. Yet since the plan for the building of the

new church had been accepted by the end of 1812, and since we know that by March of 1813 both of the old meetinghouses had been torn down, we can assume that the construction of the new meetinghouse of the White Haven and Fair Haven Society began sometime in the middle of the year. As it rose from the hallowed ground of the Green, its differences from the more overstated Center Church beside it probably became apparent; yet, as the citizens of New Haven would come to realize upon its completion, the North Church was in its subtle refinement no less an architectural achievement than its neighbor.

The most ironic fact in the history of the design of the North Church is that, despite its cleaner design, its evolution is even more complicated than that of Center Church. Tradition had held that the plans for the church were drawn by Ebenezer Johnson, a member of the building committee, and erected by David Hoadley, a builder who later joined the society. Yet Elizabeth Mills Brown, in a spectacular feat of architectural detective work, has traced elements of the design to James Gibbs of London and John McComb, Jr., of New York. In her scheme Johnson becomes a kind of genius compiler and Hoadley—who enjoyed a brief vogue among church historians as the architect of the church—emerges as the simple, unglamorous builder.[29]

Yet to argue over whose designs were whose in the North Church is, though fascinating, perhaps not worth dwelling on for too long; for, as Brown rightly emphasizes, the North Church is a splendid, elegant design, whose inspiring presence transcends speculation over its design history. The clean lines of its facade are complemented by the classic proportions of its steeple, which in turn complement and play off the effect of the Center Church, standing almost as a less dramatic yet more refined amendment of the latter. The many relationships between the two—the shortness of the steeple relative to the Center Church, the flatness of the facade when compared with the strong portico of its neighbor—suggest coordination to Brown, "an approximation of a classical composition [which] is not likely to have been coincidence."[30]

And, indeed, the consistencies of proportion, the subtleties of planned complement between Center and North churches, are remarkably repeated and confirmed in the third and last of the three churches to be completed: Trinity Church, which, when erected at Temple and Chapel streets between 1814 and 1816, completed the trio. The history of the design and construction is, in contrast to those of both the earlier churches, wonderfully simple. We know exactly who the architect was (Ithiel Town); in fact, there exists a clear and detailed statement by Town enumerating every detail of the church, which was his first major New Haven work. No legal entanglements complicated the construction of the edifice; the only major problem seems to have come near the end of construction, when the church ran out of money and had to accept donations of wood for the construction of the floors.[31] Otherwise, the building of the third church on the Green seems to have been flawless; the leasing of the church pews was accomplished as successfully as the sales had at Center and

North, and the final costs ran only to about $28,000—at least $2,000 less than each of the others.[32]

And, to top it all off, the Trinity Church was received, from its consecration on February 12, 1816, with the most enthusiastic applause of any of the three new houses of worship.[33] Center and North churches were graceful adaptations of the Federal style; yet they were just that—adaptations—and their novelty soon waned. Trinity, on the other hand, was a work of Gothic architecture, a genre nearly unheard of at that point in America. Town's church was one of the first three or four major Gothic buildings in America; its grandeur was of a scope unapproachable by wooden or brick, Georgian or Federal attempt:

> 50,000 cubic feet of rough and hewn stone from a quarry in Hamden raised the walls, five feet thick at the base. Oak beams held the floor and roof. Gothic windows arched gracefully carrying the eye upward over cornice and embattled balustrade to its pinnacled tower, 100 feet above the old Green.[34]

The stately air of Trinity Church was so striking because it evoked a past which heretofore had been impossible to duplicate in early America; it took the genius of Ithiel Town, hinted at a year earlier in his work on the Center Church and realized in Trinity, to design an appropriately medieval temple for the New Haven parish of the Church of England. Yet, despite the novelty of its concept and the majesty of its aspect, Trinity was as much a complement to the grand design and to the domination of the Center Church as was North; as Johnson *et al.* had avoided challenging the spire of the First Society's monument by selecting a cupolalike steeple, Town did so by creating for Trinity a squared-off, ornate tower, Gothic in design and graceful in character yet subservient to the great steeple of Center Church.

A story should be told here which, though it concerns the erection of all three churches on the Green really belongs to Trinity as the last member of the triad of churches constructed in New Haven during the War of 1812. The story, though almost certainly mythical, has been related so many times that it demands inclusion if only for its longevity. The details vary; but it seems that sometime during 1813, at the height of the war, the Connecticut River was blockaded by British ships. Center Church, building its fourth meetinghouse, asked permission to pass through the blockade with some valuable lumber on its way to New Haven from Middletown. The American commander relayed the request to his British counterpart, who granted it on the grounds that he had no reason to obstruct the practice of religion. A few months later, the same request was made on behalf of the North Church; again it was granted, though by this time somewhat more begrudgingly.

It was only when poor Trinity, the third church to commence building, asked permission to cross the blockade with its load of lumber, that the British commander reacted with rage. The mythical quality of the story is revealed in the variety of responses attributed to the commander: Rollin Osterweis, probably repeating the story from Henry T. Blake's dubious *Chronicles of New Haven Green*, reported his remark as "I suppose I must respect a community that is so devilishly pious!"[35] Mary Hewitt Mitchell's report of the tale gives the same kind of wording, though it contends that the remark was made following the request of the North Church builders.[36] The author of *Here Will I Dwell*, the excellent recent history of Trinity Parish, gives the line a curious revision: as he reports it, the commander replied, "If there is any place on earth that needs religion it is this New Haven. Let the rafts go through!"[37] But certainly the most direct—if not the most likely—response is given in the version told by Edmund W. Sinnott; according to him, the British officer's reply was, simply, "Don't the damned Yankees do anything but build churches?"[38]

But, of course, the reaction of the people of New Haven to the spectacle of the new churches on the Green was a great deal more enthusiastic. By all available reports, the public was enthralled by the monumental transfiguration of the Green, which had in two years been transformed from a dowdy, disorganized open space to the most well-coordinated showcase for new architecture in all of New England. The Center Church on the Green was dedicated on December 27, 1814; a year later, on December 20, 1815, followed the dedication of the North Church; and, finally, after five years of planning, Trinity Church was consecrated on February 21, 1816, the only real "church" in a row of meetinghouses and thus the only one of those buildings to receive that ceremony. Public reaction, as reported in the newspapers of the day, was quick and laudatory; much of it began even before the churches were finished, as the glory of the spectacle began to become evident before them. On the occasion of the dedication of Center Church, the *Connecticut Journal* editorialized: "It is built in a style of superior elegance. . . . The whole structure, for symmetry and neatness, is surpassed by nothing of the kind in this quarter of the country."[39] The "Third Society of White Haven and Fair Haven" gave their thanks to the building committee for "their distinguished liberality . . . appropriate taste . . . unwearied care and attention . . . and for the elegant and finished style"[40] of the North Church. And enthusiasm for the new Trinity Church, which the *Journal* labeled a "noble edifice"[41] even before its completion, was best demonstrated by the massive attendance at its consecration ceremonies, which lasted three days. *Here Will I Dwell* reports that three thousand people attended the ceremonies, in a building which seated only fourteen hundred; a man who as a six-year-old boy had been taken to the consecration by his mother recalled later that they "took seats low down on the Chapel Street side so that [they] could flee"[42] if the crowd appeared ready to crush them.

One of the most fascinating displays of public reaction to the churches came in a series of letters to the *Connecticut Journal*, all printed on March 20, 1815. Each of the three letters purported to be from a member of one of the churches; each, after professing no bias whatsoever, proceeded to extol the virtues of his society's new house of worship, ridiculing the other two in the process. The similarity of the wording and the jibes in the three letters is obvious, and may indicate either

some strenuous editing on the part of the *Journal* or a conspiracy to promote publicity for the buildings; but each is an amusing document of the friendly rivalry between the organizations and of the pride each society took in its new home.

Yet the similarity of these letters also brings us back to one of the considerations with which we began this examination: was there a conspiracy (if such an evil term can be applied to the construction of churches), a cooperative plan among the three societies and perhaps representatives of either the town or the proprietors of the Green? Again, nothing in any of the available records confirms such a suspicion, apart from the obvious fact that Ithiel Town was so intimately connected with the design and construction of two of the structures. But other matters point to at least some kind of plan on the part of the County Court, which set sites for the churches, bringing in a small society to complete the symmetry of the triad. As well, the rave reviews of the spectacle of the three churches uttered throughout the pages of the newspapers through the period of construction, as well as the appraisals of such involved parties as Ithiel Town himself, all seem to recognize at least implicitly a preconceived plan; nearly every such review treats the project as an exemplar of community cooperation, without any hint of accident. The *Journal*, in November 1815, praised the erection of the three buildings as "evidence of the public spirit and honorable munificence of our citizens." "We think we can safely assert," the editors continued, "that no town in the Union can present three similar public buildings containing their elegance of situation, nobleness of architecture, and beauty of perspective."[43] And Ithiel Town himself, in his "Description" of Trinity Church, echoed the *Journal*'s sentiments: "The situation of these three churches, in a line nearly equidistant, and viewed in connection with the other buildings round the public square is not surpassed by any arrangement of the kind in this country."[44]

Elizabeth Mills Brown, in a modern appraisal of the three churches on the Green, has written that "such a coordinated design undertaken by three separate congregations as part of the creation of a monumental city center is unmatched in Federal America."[45] In light of such distinction, it is perhaps a worthy cause to continue searching, examining old records and diaries for some trifling hint that will allow us to give full credit to the genius who gave us the plan of the three churches as they now stand. Yet no such information seems forthcoming; and, left as we are with the incomplete story of the planning of the churches on the Green, I suppose that we can continue either to look upon them as a wonderful coincidence, or to hope that some revealing fragment of the past will float our way before it lapses into the irretrievable. Meanwhile these three noble structures, facing the sunlight of the east, sustain us in our wait.

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NOTES

1. Elizabeth Mills Brown, *The United Church on the Green: An Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 14.
2. Rev. Leonard Bacon, cited in Henry T. Blake, *Chronicles of New Haven Green* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, 1898), p.10.
3. Ibid., p. 26.
4. Brown, *United Church*, p. 7.
5. Rollin Osterweis, *Three Centuries of New Haven* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 89.
6. Trinity Church on the Green, *Here Will I Dwell* (New Haven, 1976), p. 64.
7. Ibid., pp. 74, 211.
8. *Connecticut Journal*, January 23, 1812.
9. Oscar E. Maurer, *A Puritan Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 93.
10. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 211.
11. Mary Hewitt Mitchell, *History of the United Church of New Haven* (New Haven, 1942), p. 130.
12. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 211.
13. Center Church on the Green, *The Meeting House of the First Church of Christ in New Haven, Connecticut* (New Haven, n.d.), p. 7.
14. Edward E. Atwater, *History of the City of New Haven to the Present Time* (New York: Munsell, 1887), p. 127.
15. Maurer, *A Puritan Church*, p. 93.
16. Charles W. Whittlesey, *The Fourth Meeting House* (New Haven, 1938), p. 4.
17. Mitchell, *History of United Church*, p. 130.
18. Elizabeth Mills Brown, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 107.
19. Mitchell, *History of United Church*, p. 121.
20. *Meeting House of First Church*, p. 6; Edmund W. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse and Church* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 107.
21. *Meeting House of First Church*, p. 6.
22. Brown, *New Haven*, p. 107.
23. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse and Church*, p. 130.
24. Maurer, *A Puritan Church*, pp. 94-95.
25. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse and Church*, p.131.
26. Maurer, *A Puritan Church*, p. 95.
27. Blake, *Chronicles of New Haven Green*, p. 253.
28. Atwater, *History of New Haven*, p. 122.
29. Brown, *United Church*, pp. 38-39.
30. Ibid., p. 14.
31. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 213.
32. Leonard Bacon, *Thirteen Historical Discourses* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1839), p. 399.
33. Brown, *New Haven*, p. 108.
34. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 212.
35. Rollin Osterweis, Address, Sunday, June 27, 1965.
36. Mitchell, *History of United Church*, p. 132.
37. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 212.
38. Sinnott, *Meetinghouse and Church*, p. 129.
39. *Connecticut Journal*, January 2, 1815.
40. Mitchell, *History of United Church*, p. 131.
41. *Connecticut Journal*, December 19, 1815.
42. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 213.
43. *Connecticut Journal*, November 27, 1815.
44. *Here Will I Dwell*, p. 228.
45. Brown, *New Haven*, p. 106.

Mid-20th century New Haven architecture belonged to Douglas Orr, F.A.I.A. (1892-1966). The headquarters of the Southern New England Telephone Company is pure Art-Deco. No handsomer high-rise building has been built in New Haven before or since. The neo-Federal Quinnipiack Club, also designed by Douglas Orr, is next door to it. (The rendering was a gift of the architectural firm of Douglas Orr, Winder and Associates.) *Photo courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

The Collection of Vintage Architectural Drawings at the New Haven Colony Historical Society

by William A. Wiedersheim

A community's character is reflected in its buildings. As a village becomes a town and then possibly a city new buildings meeting new needs replace old structures. A fine old structure can be replaced by anything from a parking lot to a building that may be considered still finer, even though it serves a different purpose. In communities buildings disappear because their functional use is at an end and an adaptive reuse cannot be found.

One important way to preserve the heritage of a town's or city's past is through the planned retention of architectural drawings by its local historical society, either the original drawings themselves or small-scale reproductions on microfiche. Often architectural drawings are works of art in their own right. In any case, they are irreplaceable evidence of the design and building efforts of past generations.

The Whitney Library of the New Haven Colony Historical Society has developed a thoughtfully organized program of preserving the drawings of architects whose designs have created and shaped New Haven's form for the past century and three-quarters. The Society moved into new quarters in 1932. Its collections of books were moved into its handsome new library from their former home in a building that had been bought by Yale. With them came rolls of vintage

maps and architectural drawings. The books were shelved but never properly cataloged; the maps and drawings were simply placed on a shelf where they lay virtually untouched for more than forty years.

The library's fine collection of books, pamphlets, and archival material on New Haven's history and the genealogies of its early families remained only informally cataloged, but eventually, thanks to a generous grant from the New Haven Foundation, it became possible to properly catalog them. The maps and drawings, however, remained unregistered, although they were moved to a safer spot. The cataloging of the printed and archival material had first priority, and this required several years to complete. Finally it was possible to move forward to the care of the maps of early New Haven and the architectural drawings, some of which were fragile and torn, particularly the maps.

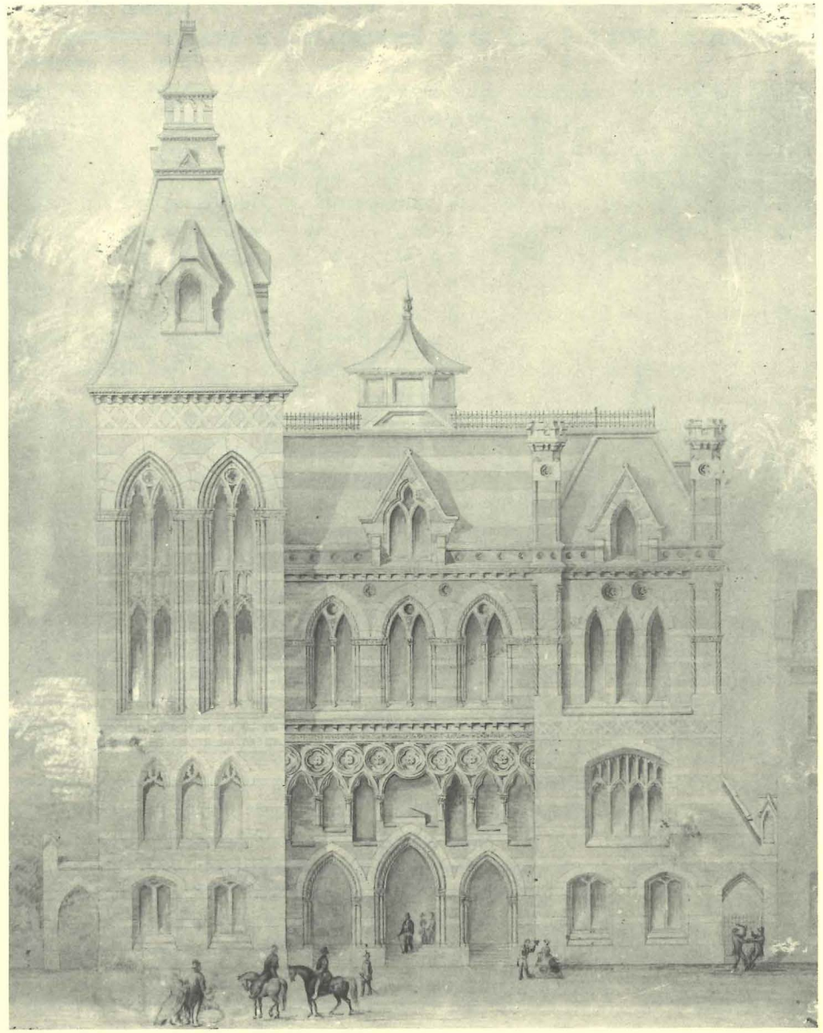
During the spring of 1979 arrangements were made for two students from the Winterthur Conservation Program to spend the summer as interns at the Historical Society. The Society's slim budget did not permit salary or honorarium, but the two students were guests in the home of one of its directors, a handsomely remodeled Victorian on Long Island Sound, and they were entertained hospitably by other members of the board.

The interns set up a small conservation laboratory in the basement of the Society's building and accomplished a great deal during their two months of work. They skillfully cleaned and repaired the maps and drawings that were in the poorest condition, then encapsulated them in Mylar. The two enjoyed a positive professional experience and had a good time too.

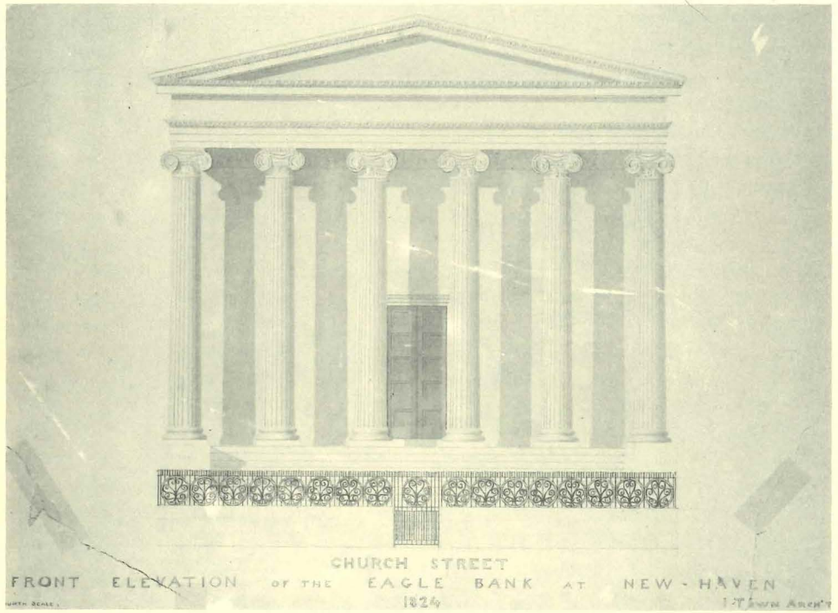
After their departure, little progress was made in conservation for several months. However, a corporate gift permitted the purchase of two fireproof cabinets for the proper storage of the maps and drawings; at long last they could be properly shelved. At first it was feared that the cabinets might disturb the ambience of the handsome library, but they have fitted in quite well.

In the spring of 1981 a retired New Haven businessman who was an architectural history buff volunteered to help with the conservation of the architectural drawings as best he could. Arrangements were made for him to learn the rudiments of paper conservation at the Conservation Studio in Yale's Sterling Library, and for eight weeks he was a conscientious student there. At the end of his training stint the Yale conservators gave him an amusing diploma headlined, "Your other Yale diploma," his earlier sheepskin having been earned more than forty years before.

The volunteer dry-cleaned and encapsulated nearly two hundred drawings. He was able to mend minor tears but had neither the skill nor the equipment to undertake major repairs. Fortunately, he knew his limitations. There were several rolls of drawings that would have crumbled had they been unrolled, and wisely he left them alone. The Winterthur interns had completed the most difficult tasks; he considered his efforts a necessary and, to him, fascinating mopping-up operation.



The original rendering of the design for New Haven's High Victorian city hall. It was designed in Henry Austin's office by David R. Brown, an Austin protégé, in 1868. The NHCHS treasures this drawing. *Photo courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*



Ithiel Town's classic design of 1824 for the proposed structure for the Eagle Bank of New Haven. The bank failed a few days before construction was to begin. *Photo courtesy New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

After having dry-cleaned and encapsulated most of the extant drawings, the volunteer moved on to other interests away from the Society. Much of the architectural material it has acquired since then has been in the form of photographs or drawings of contemporary projects that were received in mint condition and did not require cleaning and conservation. However, a number of drawings still await the care of a skilled conservator.

The New Haven Colony Historical Society's collection of architectural drawings begins with several by the city's first noted architect, Ithiel Town (1784-1844). One of them is his elegant rendering of the Greek Revival facade of the proposed Eagle Bank of New Haven, dated 1825. Unfortunately, just before ground was to be broken for the building the Eagle Bank became insolvent and the structure was never built.

New Haven's mid-nineteenth-century architectural scene was dominated by the legendary Henry Austin (1804-91), who had apprenticed under Town and who practiced architecture in New Haven for more than half a century. Towered villas he designed in the Italianate style have been found as far away as Maine and New Jersey. Most of Austin's drawings are at Yale, but the Historical Society has the original elevation drawing of New Haven's High Victorian Gothic city hall (1868), designed in Austin's office by his young protégé David R. Brown.

Donald Grant Mitchell (1822-1908), author, horticulturist, and talented amateur landscape architect and architect—a man for all seasons—designed many of New Haven's public parks. A number of his proposals in the form of delicate watercolor renderings are among the Society's valued holdings, as is the design of the Connecticut building at the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia, which he and David R. Brown designed together.

Rufus Russell (1823-96) was one of a number of New Haven architects who trained under Henry Austin. Evidence of his talents and popularity is preserved at the Society in the form of watercolor renderings of the elevations, often with poché floor plans, of nearly three hundred robust Victorian projects. Most of the designs are for homes, some of them for New Haven's leading citizens of the day, but they also include the old city police building, five schools, three office buildings, several churches, including the one that now houses the Yale Repertory Theatre, the Young Men's Institute, and a firehouse. These are invaluable portrayals of New Haven's late-nineteenth-century heyday.

Leoni W. Robinson (1852-1923) worked briefly for Henry Austin as a young man. His varied architectural practice flourished during the first decades of the twentieth century. His commissions ranged from factory buildings for the then mighty Winchester Arms Company to the clubhouse for the New Haven Country Club, which is still enjoyed by its members today.

Recently, drawings for 150 of his projects were found in the carriage house of his summer home in Pemaquid, Maine, where they had lain undisturbed for more than sixty years, a small mountain of rolls of renderings, plans, elevations, and details of buildings of all kinds. They were in good condition and repre-

sented a generation of New Haven history. Funds for their acquisition by the NHCHS were subscribed by a small group of its individual and corporate friends. Late in 1985 the rolls of drawings arrived in the Society's basement to await cataloging and a modicum of cleaning and conservation. It was a remarkable archeological find of which the Society has taken full advantage. Now Jane Greenfield and Nancy Martin are repairing, cleaning, and restoring them with great skill and care.

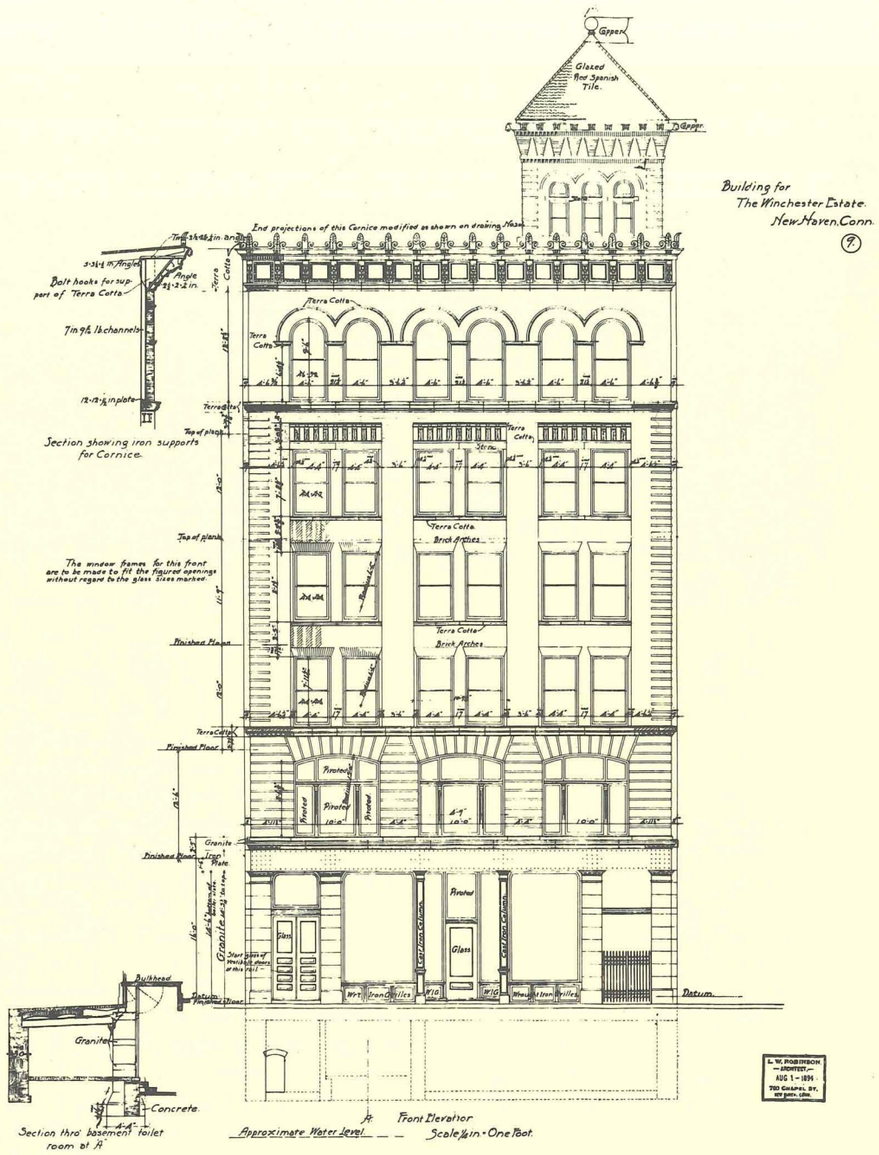
Douglas Orr, F.A.I.A. (1892-1966), was the dominant architect of mid-twentieth-century New Haven. He designed the clubhouses of the Lawn and Quinnipiack clubs, scores of attractive homes, and more than forty structures for the Southern New England Telephone Company. His commissions included the Memorial Wing of the Yale-New Haven Hospital and a number of churches and important office buildings, including the handsome Art Deco headquarters building of the telephone company. Orr was at his best in the slick, neo-Colonial format of the late 1920s epitomized in his charming design of Alumnae House on the campus of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

From 1947 through 1949 Orr served as president of the American Institute of Architects and was invited by President Truman to serve on the Commission on the Restoration of the Executive Mansion, of which he was elected vice-chairman by his fellow members of the commission. Douglas Orr's great influence on the physical New Haven is represented at the NHCHS by his firm's file photographs of his completed work, some of his own sketches, and mementos of his distinguished career.

More recent acquisitions and contributions to the Society's architectural drawing holdings have come from Paul Rudolph and the firm of Roche-Dinkeloo, both noted architectural firms of today. Some of Paul Rudolph's designs for New Haven civic buildings have not been built and probably never will be. Yet over the years they will be of interest for what might have been.

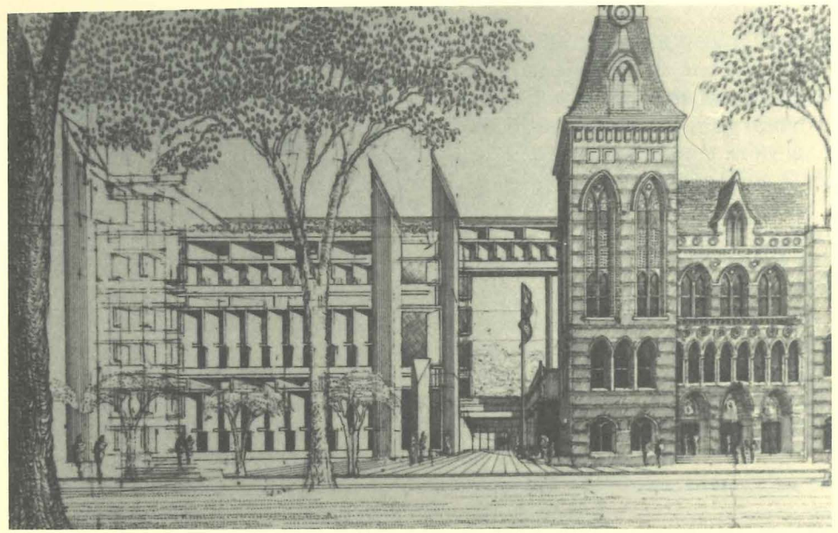
The handsome New Haven Colony Historical Society building was designed in 1929 by J. Frederick Kelly, a fine architect and noted historian of Colonial architecture. Inexplicably until a few months ago the Society had neither his original drawings nor a set of blueprints of the building; none could be found. Late in 1985 the Society commissioned Matthews and Connell, architects, to plan extensive renovations, and a member of the firm located a set of blueprints in the New Haven city building department that had been mis-filed there for more than fifty-five years. The city willingly gave the blueprints to the Society and at long last it now has a record of the architectural plans, elevations and details of its own home.

Interspersed with the renderings, drawings, photographs of completed work, and mementos of these key architects of the past 175 years are drawings by designers of lesser renown, but these also add value to the collection. The New Haven Redevelopment Agency has given its files to the Historical Society, and they contain a great deal of material on the architecture of downtown buildings


Copper
Glazed Red Spanish Tile.
Building for The Winchester Estate. New Haven, Conn.
End projections of this Cornice modified as shown on drawing. Nov.
Terra Cotta
Section showing iron supports for Cornice.
The window frames for this front are to be made to fit the figured openings without regard to the glass sizes marked.
Brick Arches
Finished Floor
Granite
Pirated
Glass
Bulkhead
Granite
Concrete
Datum.
Section thro' basement toilet room at A
A Front Elevation
Approximate Water Level
Scale ¼in. = One Foot.
L. W. ROBINSON — ARCHITECT — AUG 1 - 1894 — 750 CHAPEL ST. NEW HAVEN, CONN.

Leoni Robinson (1852-1923) was one of New Haven's busiest turn-of-the-century architects. His design of an office building in 1894 was an investment for the prominent Winchester family.

150 of Robinson's designs for buildings of all kinds in the New Haven Colony Historical Society collection represent a generation of New Haven architectural history. The drawings were found in 1984 in the carriage house of his summer home in Maine where they had lain undisturbed for more than sixty years.



Paul Rudolph's rendering of his proposal for a contemporary New Haven city library that would adjoin the High Victorian city hall. The design will probably remain a proposal. Presently the city plans to remodel and renovate its present handsome library designed by Cass Gilbert in 1908. (The drawing is a gift of the architect.)

constructed during New Haven's heady days of urban renewal during the 1950s. Unfortunately, the agency paid little heed to historic preservation then, but, with the New Haven Preservation Trust as watchdog, certainly does today. The files are being organized by a young architect and architectural historian who has volunteered his services. A retired draftsman is cataloging post-1981 acquisitions of architectural drawings and photographs.

Specific holdings, however, do more than record physical aspects of New Haven's history. They are a useful resource for research by professional architectural historians, a growing field of scholarly study.

The New Haven Colony Historical Society's collection of vintage and contemporary architectural material is by no means unique. But it is impressive in the span of time represented, in the planned program of its development, and in the recognition of the care with which the material, some of it more than 150 years old, must be scientifically conserved. The collection is a crown jewel of the historical society of a relatively small city. Volunteers have played a major role in its development. The concept is an important vehicle of historic preservation and a record of the stream of construction in New Haven over the years.

WILLIAM A. WIEDERSHEIM, formerly Senior Research Associate at the New Haven Colony Historical Society and presently a Director, has written extensively on the history and art history of New Haven.

Address delivered before the New Haven Colony Historical Society on May 5th 1986

Mayor Richard Lee:
A National Vantage

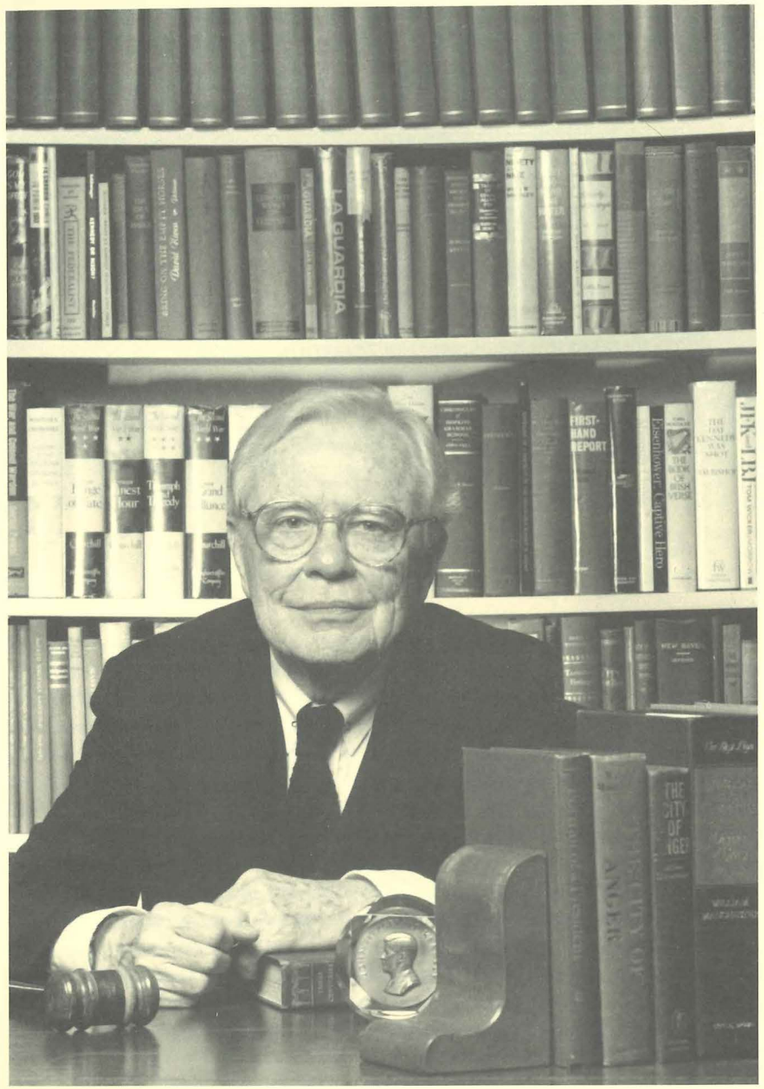
by Robert Wood

We gather on a deceptively simple occasion. The easiest interpretation of our coming together is that we are here to honor Dick Lee. We come to thank him for his contributions to the collective well-being of New Haven; for his discerning taste in enhancing the aesthetic quality of this urban scene; for the signal impact he has had on national urban policy. Yet, simply testimonial praise, platitudes, and the recitation of old war stories ill fits an association with the scholarly reputation of this Society. We could have that kind of ceremony at the Rotarians—or Mory's.

You deserve better than a parade of clichés and banalities from the banquet circuits, interspersed with an occasional quotation from a New England poet. More important, Lee deserves better.

Yet deciding what not to say doesn't resolve the dilemma of choosing what to say. Twenty-eight years ago Dick Lee and I became colleagues by necessity—bound together in the common enterprise of urban policymaking—and soon thereafter—I like to think—we became friends by choice.

So, one way of talking about Lee is to gather up the personal recollections of his accomplishments as I observed them over the years. I could thus *authenticate* what is already New Haven folk wisdom. I could confirm the historic tale of how a two-time loser, then eight-time winner from—if you will forgive a necessary



Richard C. Lee
Mayor of the City of New Haven
1953-1969

professional perspective—a small, not especially noteworthy northeastern city (in Charles Moritz's words "a moribund mill town spoiling the view from Yale's Gothic towers") became the favorite mayor of two presidents.

Alternatively, as a sometime social scientist currently resurrected by Wesleyan, I can regard Dick as a datum that can talk back. And, as we all know, a datum who certainly will!

Let me start from that second, more objective perspective, asking three questions:

—What specific qualities of leadership did Lee exhibit that made his mayoralty so exceptional?
—How was it transformed to national stature? How did he "escape" New Haven and avoid the fate of so many mayors who moved from "Who's Who" to "Who's He?"
—What lessons can we draw from that leadership style to confront and solve contemporary urban problems? Is Lee passé, a relic of a bygone era, or is his brand of visible, decisive, expensive public action relevant to urban issues today?

As for the concept of leadership, let me make my position clear. I do not subscribe to that school of scholarship which looks to trends and technology as impersonal masters of our urban destiny. Such a view denigrates the role of individual leader to a switching station, transmitting robotlike signals from interest groups, elites, the public at large to produce public policy. Or, as Fred Greenstein puts it, this view holds that a person who governs is unimportant. "Actor dispensability" is the lugubrious concept in vogue. Leaders are both "look-alikes" and "throw-aways."

I belong to a different school. I hold, with E. E. Schattschneider, the view that "forces brought to bear on democratic government are not wholly beyond conscious control. To manage pressures is to govern; to let pressures run wild is to abdicate."

In this context, the key issue is how well did Lee "manage" pressures in a volatile, turbulent urban environment? How did he turn those pressures creatively into the service of the City of New Haven? He did so in four ways that, I think, could become the model for the modern mayor. Lee

—searched out new ideas that went below the surface of conventional wisdom to identify the forces still incipient but soon to predominate;
—built coalitions, particularly at the national level, to provide him a base powerful enough, with enough resources, to respond to the emerging pressures;
—shaped policies that were flexible and changeable as the environmental pressures themselves shifted;

—and, until the very end when pressures became truly overwhelming, he maintained trust among colleagues and constituents. He kept the faith, and by doing so, *kept the peace*—the first and foremost obligation of a political leader.

Two links then—with experts and other politicians—skillfully established; two strategies—flexibility in policy, consistency in human relations—were the bedrock elements of Lee's leadership. They propelled him to national prominence.

Briefly, let us look at each of these as the mayor went about the creative management of Schattschneider's pressures.

The Management of Pressures: (1) Seducing the Experts

I first met Lee in 1958, summoned to that dark and dingy city hall from MIT by the mayor in his capacity as chairman of the Urban Committee of the Democratic National Advisory Committee. This was a body established by the DNC chair Paul Butler at the instigation of Adlai Stevenson.

The committee was not popular with the regulars. The party's congressional leaders—Lyndon Johnson and Sam Rayburn—had publicly disowned it. Stevenson, with his habitual hand-wringing, was no longer "sure" about it.

For a Democratic politician it was risky business, since the presidential primary campaign was under way—Stevenson, Humphrey, Johnson already contenders, Kennedy the wild card. Yet Lee took the assignment of producing a Democratic convention plank on cities. Five years into his mayoralty, buildings razed for the Oak Street Project, but new structures and highway connector incomplete, Rotival's master plan still a vision, Church Street Project just announced, Lee was then, in the words of our trade, "up to his ass in alligators." Yet he looked at the assembled group of academics, smiled imperturbably, and asked, "Got any new ideas? We've got to look ahead." The first versions of Model Cities and the War on Poverty began that day.

The Management of Pressures: (2) Building Coalitions

Building coalitions is, of course, standard operating procedure in American politics. Every public official tries. The trick is to build the right coalitions and to avoid the wrong ones. In American cities, circa 1950s, the conventional coalition was local, party-oriented, constituency, patronage responsive. Lee first tolerated, then eschewed that pattern, ultimately to break with Arthur Barbieri. Entering the Eisenhower era, with urban renewal supported by downtown business interests that were panicked by the rise of suburban shopping centers, Lee was one of the first of the new breed of "strong mayors" to make his peace with the private sector. He had his Republican business colleagues vouch for his respectability in Washington, while his technical tigers—Logue, Sviridoff, Taylor, Talbot, et al.—cultivated and seduced the Federal bureaucrats.

Lee recognized the then not obvious truth that no city could go it alone in urban redevelopment. He knew that the state, even in the friendly partisan hands of John Bailey, could not help much. He understood that the coalition to be built was in Washington. So he proceeded, while Eisenhower was president, to begin his extraordinary drawdown of Federal funds—$120 million by 1967. In per capita terms, New Haven had more Federal money by a factor of three than any other American city—$790 compared to second place Newark at $284 and third place Boston at $268.

As the 1960 election approached, Lee took care to prime the pump. Using the ideas of the Advisory Committee, in cahoots with Dave Lawrence of Pittsburgh, he trapped John Kennedy into an urban commitment at a Pittsburgh campaign rally when the urban experience of that cool, calculating young candidate was largely limited to a Bowden Street apartment in Boston maintained for residential voting requirements. He also trapped a young MIT professor into writing that speech.

The assiduous cultivation of Washington expanded and flourished after 1960. Kennedy owed Lee, as he acknowledged at the Yale commencement in 1962; he and brother Bob urged him to run for the Senate or take a Cabinet post. Lee declined, understanding full well that the United States Senate was not then and never has been a friend of the American city. And a place at the Cabinet table is not a power base. He took Federal money for New Haven instead.

He cultivated Lyndon Johnson as well, for Johnson far more than Kennedy would anticipate the gathering urban storm, reach out for ideas, and value performance at the street level. Lee was there with ideas, programs, support for the new department, Housing and Urban Development, still declining a Federal post, still asking for and getting money for New Haven.

One day when the president, Bob Weaver, and I were considering the conflicting claims of that Murderer's Row of then mayors of America—Daly of Chicago, Collins of Boston, Maier of Milwaukee, Allen of Atlanta, Tate of Philadelphia, Lindsay of New York, Barr of Pittsburgh—the president observed: "I like Dick Lee best. He's the kind of s.o.b. who'll cut your arms off at the elbows, but he's so smooth you won't know it till you reach for coffee." Bob Weaver amended: "Pleasantly arrogant." I kept writing the checks.

The Management of Pressures: (3) Changing Policies

Formulating a policy and finding the resources to implement it are enormously difficult tasks. Changing a policy in midstream, replacing one, or abandoning one as obsolete is even tougher.

The era when Lee became mayor was the era of the American Empire, those brief years when our confidence in ourselves—as the savior of Western civilization, the defender of freedom in Asia along the 38th Korean Parallel, the number one nation economically and technologically of the world—was at its peak. Corporate business dominated the political scene, and for the city the definition

of urban renewal was bricks and mortar. It was downtown that mattered, the Central Business District was the focal point of policy.

Unnoticed in Washington was the northern migration of southern blacks displaced from farming. Unnoticed was the wretched condition of the urban poor. What public housing that was built was grudgingly constructed as high-rises to save unit costs: Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, Columbia Point in Boston. These were the symbols of the Eisenhower solution: "warehousing" the poor.

It was Lee who anticipated the new conditions, moved first to manage the pressures that civil rights, urban unemployment, and urban poverty unleashed. Before the Federal war on poverty was even on the drawing board, Lee had wrangled $2.5 million dollars from the Ford Foundation in its gray-areas programs. He had received the first Federal grant to combat juvenile delinquency. He had suggested publicly that blacks practice civil disobedience in the north as well as the south to spotlight the reality of slum living. Human renewal replaced physical renewal as his first priority. Lee kept up with the times.

The Management of Pressures: (4) Keeping the Peace

Three rules in public life are taken as marks of the true professional:

—You make commitments carefully and prudently, but once a commitment is made you keep it. No welshing.
—When it is necessary to blast an adversary publicly, you always tell him or her first. No blindsiding.
—And, more controversial perhaps, but true: You never do a favor for an enemy. No hypocrisy.

However crude or cruel these rules may seem, they are essential in building trust for they ensure predictability in public behavior—the absolute sine qua non in politics. You simply must know how your friends and adversaries will behave. Otherwise, it is sandlot ball, a game for amateurs.

I know Lee mostly from the national perspective, not from the entire record, but to the Feds and to his colleagues across the nation he lived by these cardinal rules: No welshing; No blindsiding; No hypocrisy.

So, with one inevitable, inexorable exception, Lee kept the peace—among competing interests, groups, elites, constituencies. On August 19, 1967, when New Haven blew up in rioting, it blew as a piece of a national tragedy. One of the last firecrackers of black rage, foreshadowed by Watts, ignited in 1967 by Newark and Detroit, exploding in some fifty cities before it was New Haven's turn. And in New Haven the explosion was contained: in three days of rioting, not a shot was fired by a policeman, not one citizen was seriously injured.

Now it is difficult to convey to those who were not there in the long hot summer of 1967 the sense of loss and defeat for those of us engaged in the Great Society, topside or street level. Later research was to show the causes of the rage: great expectations running ahead of demonstrable results of programs still on

the shakedown cruise, coupled with the absence of networks and community discipline among northern blacks that had been the hallmark of the southern civil rights movement. But, then, it seemed that the Great Society had failed—or so the neoconservative critics were eager and quick to conclude—rather than simply being aborted, by war and protest to war.

Pressures did run wild. What is to be recorded here is that they ran wild for only a short time. Lee still governed. He did not abdicate.

Urban Leadership Today

If we know now the qualities of Lee's leadership and how he helped shape and then use a national coalition, the final question is, How pertinent are those skills and traits in managing urban pressures today?

Certainly the urban environment is different. Technology has run apace, transforming our economy from an industrial to a service-informational one. Patterns of urban settlements have changed. The detached, single-family, suburban ranch house is out; condominiums are in. Business firms are more footloose, yet command and control functions of multinational corporations are more city-centered than before. Commercial construction is booming in city after city, one billion square feet of new office/hotel space scheduled to come on line this year.

In terms of policy, public-private partnership is the buzz phrase of today. Media and learned journals alike hail the strategy of public officials and private developers negotiating their respective shares of new urban development projects. Richard Hudnut of Indianapolis is now the mayor in vogue—hailing the rise of the "entrepreneurial city." Lee's talents of negotiation, persistence, pleasant arrogance—his succession of cliff-hangers with Malley's, Macy's, and Yale—would certainly be in demand.

Yet these characteristics of the new partnership are worrisome. First, it is not clear that they are equal partnerships for the city. The national private developers who initiate them are often motivated by rewards not tied to local economic conditions. Instead, they are moved by the windfalls of the 1981 Budget Recession Act, which gives tax breaks to syndicates, real estate investors, banks. These encourage overbuilding, with local business interests left holding leases for vacant space. Houston is the prime example—but for thirty large cities the vacancy rates exceed 16 percent. Local businesses and local governments are in danger of being outmaneuvered and beguiled by the vision of shining architectural triumphs that turn out to be economic scams. The hometown too often is left holding the bag.

Second, the "people" component is missing. Currently, it is fashionable to talk of "linkages" by which private developers set aside funds for housing as well as commercial space. But concrete examples of these programs, even in "hot" cities where downtown demand is high, are few and far between. What is clear is that housing starts for low and moderate income families are at an all-time national low.

More ominously, there is little or no recognition of the growing ranks of the urban underclass—the increasing number of Americans who live under the poverty line who are neither employed nor employable, with no discernible income, no expectations of work and no disposition to work, illiterate, unskilled, surviving by recourse to underworld activities. The minority young, the de-institutionalized mentally ill, the bag ladies, the homeless—these are new members of the urban society. Their needs, their concerns do not seem to figure in the schemes of the entrepreneurial city.

Third, in both economic and human development, the Federal government is missing. The program cuts since 1980 in housing, Urban Development Action Grants, Community Development Block Grants, all the tools in kits of urban assistance so painfully assembled over twenty years are at starvation levels of funding or in threat of outright elimination. The Federal government acknowledges no national responsibility for the urban condition—although our immigration policy is a national obligation and the productivity of our economy is a national responsibility. Cities are left to their own devices, twisting in the wind as national pressures of new immigrants and new patterns of industrial location play whimsically upon them.

In the context of these new urban conditions and policies, one wonders whether the Richard Lees, for all their skills and experience, would be welcomed or find their roles comfortable.

Six years ago next month, the U.S. Conference of Mayors presented Lee its Distinguished Service Award for his effective advocacy on behalf of America's cities. In responding, Lee cited the satisfactions of his time in office. He defined the core of the mayor's job as "wiping away tears from the eyes" of a city's people so that "each tear becomes a star in the sky." So, "filling the sky above with stars" is the mayor's highest calling.

To Lee—in his words again—"The tears in the eyes of the young and the old, the hungry, the unloved, the ill-housed, the ill-clothed, and worst of all, the ignored"—were not to be tolerated. They were not acceptable to Americans.

In candor I do not see that concern for tears, that goal for stars in the sky in the mayors of today's entrepreneurial cities; nor in the architects of glass towers, nor in the developers' lease-back, equity-conditioned, front-loading financial arrangements. I know only that so long as these concerns are not addressed, Schattschneider's pressures will not be managed. And someday we will see another summer of 1967, when they will run wild again. And those who presume to govern urban America today will learn too late that they have abdicated. The tears will be too many and the stars too few.

And all of us who love cities as Dick Lee does will be the losers.

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R. C. Lee Program: New Haven Colony Historical Society, May 5, 1986

by Robert Leeney, Kevin Roche, Robert Wood.

In my assignment to talk about the myths and the politics surrounding Dick Lee I am not sure whether my role is that of the killer shark at the beach party or the minnow on Dick Lee's hook. My colleagues on the panel can pick and choose between degrees of compliment in looking at the architecture or the national policy implications of the Lee Years in New Haven. But as one who shared those years in this city with Mayor Lee—not without some publicly stated reservations—I must live with my record as well as his.

Abraham Lincoln once said that he "feared explanations explanatory of things already explained," and that is a counsel worth remembering, I suppose, as we reminisce about redevelopment and renewal issues that have been hashed over in dozens of books and scores of magazines as well as in the newspapers and the minds of New Haveners.

What we are after tonight, I think, are some ideas about what makes Dick Lee run—or perhaps I should say tick, just to discourage in him any impulse toward another campaign.

We are dealing with the most forceful, and the most faithful, New Haven mayor of this century. Only two or three other mayors in this city's long history held so firm a leadership role as Lee. He plunged us into modern urban politics, devising them as he went, and he created the kind of Democratic Party coalitions that overwhelmed the old Republican Party here and has kept it prostrate for thirty years—leaving us, for better or for worse, with a one-party municipal system. He tore down the commercial center of New Haven—some would say he bulldozed it ruthlessly—and gave us through bold vision and some deep trauma a new, modern downtown which retains large potential and unfolding pos-

sibilities despite its disappointments. He engaged the community simultaneously in other sweeping renewal efforts that reached into every neighborhood and school—and that produced two contrasting jewels in the restoration of antique Wooster Square and in the engineering and buildup from swamp and harbor-bottom mud of the impressive Long Wharf area. He initiated the first application of "human renewal" through Community Progress, Inc.—and though that agency later foundered on the grandiosity of its administrators it still provides, both for what it did and did not do, a basic study for developing social theory, welfare reforms, and self-help programs among the poor.

At the same time his political skills, his administrative eloquence, and his Irish charm caught the attention of the Kennedys early in their search for innovation and ability; he became a natural leader among the mayors of the country; and his "raids" on Washington's redevelopment moneys were the most successful on record. Much of his urban renewal, all over town, was linked to new highway construction patterns and tapped the resources or manipulated the road plans of generally reluctant State of Connecticut bureaucracies.

Except for those first, dim seventeenth-century years when the New Haven Colony was being wrested from the virgin wilderness there has never been so much concentrated change in this old town—nor so much civic pain.

The process by which so much was attempted and, if slightly less final, so very much achieved, remains even a quarter century later a matter for marvel and dispute.

The internationally known French city planner Maurice Rotival had, as a refugee teaching at Yale during World War II and working with the City Plan Commission, envisioned in 1941 the outlines of Interstate 95 and Interstate 91 and the Oak Street Connector, which now bears Richard C. Lee's name. Rotival saw them as undesigned and unfunded but essential traffic arteries for a modern New Haven. When Dick Lee came home, early and ulcer-prone, from military service in 1943 to work on public information at Yale, he was beguiled by Rotival's plan. In four terms as an alderman Dick Lee put forth urban redesign as a local necessity. When he first ran for mayor in the election of 1949 he campaigned for local use of the slum clearance and new housing funds available from the Truman administration.

After William Celentano was reelected mayor that year, beating Dick Lee by 712 votes, his Republican administration set up a city redevelopment agency, and later Maurice Rotival became a city consultant. In 1951, on the usual two-year mayoralty cycle, Lee and Celentano fought it out again. Celentano's plurality of 16 votes at the polls was later cut by a court to 2 votes—but those 2 votes kept Celentano in the mayor's office for two more years. Finally in 1953 the persistent Lee won by nearly 3,600 votes—and the subject for this evening's panel was made inevitable.

The two lost elections of 1949 and 1951 have receded into the mists of history, but in any review of the man and the myth I think they should be writ large

enough for notice. This is because Lee has never been a philosophic loser. He plays and he works to win. Such frustration, such tantalizingly close totals—for a man who wouldn't hesitate to muster or cajole 712 needed votes from any passing throng downtown—honed to a never-again-nicked keenness Dick Lee's political instincts. They made him then, as he is now, the most personally concerned and diligently sincere of local flesh pressers and funeral followers, of honest favor-doers and friends in time of need. They may even have prompted party chairman Arthur Barbieri's legendary commitment to the absentee ballot as a vital tool of a free electorate. The two tight losses were preludes to Dick Lee's eight big wins.

Having won, Lee appointed a young lawyer, Edward Logue, as his deputy mayor, a job without municipal precedent, and as the administrator of his redevelopment program. Thus came the revolution. Lee also appointed Town Chairman Arthur Barbieri as public works director. This was the measure of his political regularity and of his unwavering dependence—at frank and basic levels—upon traditional party concepts of loyalty and reward. He also appointed a Charter Revision Commission (indicating a thrust for stronger mayoral power which was never realized. And he struggled with the Board of Finance and the police and then the fire commissioners over wages and promotions and implicitly over their willingness to take his signals if not his orders. He also put quickly into place a Citizens Action Commission made up of many prominent business leaders, most probably not Democrats, which was designed to rally the power structure behind redevelopment and, if necessary, to short-circuit any inclination toward grumpy independence among the Chamber of Commerce members, whose organization generally made clear that slow-and-stodgy was better than whiz-kidding as the way to go.

From here on we could swamp this review in the financial complexities of the Church Street project and the many other programs and projects that followed. There were repeated court battles, extensions of contracts, cancellations and renewals of intricate negotiations by scores of important bureaus, agencies, and individuals. There was a roller coaster pattern of highs and lows, of exhilaration and deep doubts, about all the things New Haven was being told and, then, was not being told.

We got downtown one-way street patterns in 1954. We got Ed Logue's controversial declaration that New Haven was a "dying city"—this from our chief salesman. We got Roger L. Stevens as the primary developer for a project vaguely labeled the "wholesale market—Church Street extension area." We got a Board of Aldermen in 1955 with thirty-one Democrats and two Republicans—and it has been downhill ever since then—except for the two times when Harry Townshend made it a contest. We got a 2 to 1 vote for Dick Lee over Republican Phil Mancini, Jr. A month after that triumphant election we got the first of Dick Lee's serious medical problems in office, this time the removal of a stomach ulcer.

And that was simply his first term. There were seven others. All of them were packed with equivalent action: the sale of two old high schools to Yale and the building of replacements, long struggles over the Savitt jewelry store and the Malley property, Lee as an urban specialist for Kennedy's Democratic Advisory Council, getting Yale to participate in financing for Stevens and other redevelopment efforts, keeping 1,200 city jobs by relocating the Sargent & Company factory, the planning and construction of the Knights of Columbus headquarters and the Coliseum, wooing and winning Macy's as another central department store, moving in 1963 into what became a no-win fight to overcome racial segregation in the New Haven schools with a partial busing plan, quelling riots in the Hill in 1967 when the entire country endured its long, hot summer, and dozens of other turbulently viewed and tempestuously argued programs in all parts of the city.

There were the hurtful jokes about New Haven as a Dick Lee Doughnut—too oily, too crummy, with too big a hole in the center. Billy Gaxton, a top comedian of the Broadway musical stage, included the city on the classic Grand Tour. Said he: "I have been to New Haven and seen the ruins."

Still, the chemistry at most times during those years was positive, effervescent, action-related, eager to tackle rather than to turn away from problems, confident that effort and imagination could reduce problems and even, occasionally, provide complete solutions.

What we ask ourselves tonight, I guess, is, How did Dick Lee do it?

Yale's Robert Dahl wrote his highly respected study of New Haven's administrative history over the generations—titled *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in the American City*—with the Lee years as climax. He saw Richard C. Lee as multitalented, as the following passage shows:

> He was a worrier, who spent much of his time laying plans to ward off incipient dangers.
>
> He possessed a large repertoire of political skills and an unusual ability to perform a variety of different roles. His political skills included a talent for public relations that played no small part in developing his national reputation. He had an investment banker's willingness to take risks that held the promise of large long-run payoffs, and a labor mediator's ability to head off controversy by searching out areas for agreement by mutual understanding, compromise, negotiation, and bargaining. He possessed a detailed knowledge of the city and its people, a formidable information-gathering system, and an unceasing, full-time preoccupation with all the aspects of his job. His relentless drive to achieve his goals meant that he could be tough and ruthless. But toughness was not his political style, for his overriding strategy was to rely on persuasion rather than threats.
>
> The Mayor had learned to move with outward ease in several sharply contrasting worlds. He bought his clothes at the best men's shops in New Haven . . . was one of the few members of Mory's, Yale's undergraduate eating club, who had never attended Yale; and he was perhaps the only associate fellow in any of Yale's ten residential colleges who had never attended a college or university of any kind. He was on a first name basis with a large proportion of the Yale establishment from the president and deans to the headwaiter at the Faculty Club.
>
> For a poor boy growing up in New Haven, life was not always so congenial, and it is clear that Lee's decade as director of public relations at Yale was an important period in his development. . . . The Mayor's Yale associations could have been a severe handicap, but his political opponents found it difficult to change the image that Lee himself carefully cultivated of a local boy in the mayor's office, a home-grown Irishman, a family man, a devoted Catholic, a hard-working mayor and a friend to everyone in the city.

Allan R. Talbot, who was one of Dick Lee's braintrusters and who wrote *The Mayor's Game*, a book about life in Lee's City Hall, couches similar views in somewhat different terms. But before I turn to Talbot on Lee let me digress briefly to look at Lee's relationship with the newspapers. I would be remiss if I didn't say that one of the myths of Dick Lee's administration was his constant claim that the *Register* and the Jacksons were out to put him down. Rather, they were simply not out to build him up. Dick and his aides constantly cited as devious criticism the cautious, questioning policy of a rich, eighty-year-old publisher. And those questions asked in 1957 or 1960 have been pretty much justified by downtown New Haven's deficiencies in 1986. The papers in those years, when I was writing many of the editorials, really did no more than provide, rather moderately, another opinion. Dick Lee had generally co-opted the entire business community and the banks through his Citizens Action Commission. Yale, as a hotbed of Adlai Stevenson admirers, was his pussycat, and he was Yale's. The Board of Aldermen was a rubber stamp legislature which literally held some of its majority caucuses in the mayor's office. Dick Lee alternately browbeat and charmed news reporters—as he did me. At some point, resistance was in order. The papers never endorsed him despite his excellence. This is a fact. But endorsement wasn't a buttress he needed, and his embrace was so all-encompassing that—genuine philosophical and ideological differences aside—*The Register,* I think, did right and in some respects did valiantly by resisting abuse and blandishment and trying to provide the town with a view other than that officially proclaimed at City Hall.

Of this running dispute Allan Talbot says, "While Lee encouraged the notion that he was being victimized by a monolithic, tyrannical newspaper, he was very much aware of the actual conditions at the papers. The biggest complaint of the newspaper establishment was the secrecy which cloaked the administration plans and programs."

That testy relationship noted, let me get back to Allan Talbot on Mayor Lee and his leadership. Says Talbot:

> At the age of 35 Lee had developed what successful politicians must have—poise, shrewdness, apparent self-confidence, and a sufficient ego to withstand personal abuse. Still, he lacked the quality of purpose which makes a successful politician outstanding. He needed to attach his personal dynamism to a public cause.
>
> It is virtually impossible to reconstruct the process or events which ultimately convinced Lee that the monumental job of reconstructing New Haven would be his cause. The decision itself seems to have been made in 1953, but the elements of it stretched as far back as Lee's boyhood in Newhallville, an area which typified the decrepit state of many of the city's neighborhoods and hinted at the rock-bottom slum conditions of still others. . . . The symptoms of the city's over-all decline were also observable within a three-block radius of the ancient City Hall.

In another observation Talbot writes,

> In the face of urban renewal disruptions and problems, Lee would exude confidence and optimism sometimes to the point of self-delusion. And for the voter who sought a personal spot in renewal, Lee found one. Under his administration urban renewal became as comforting as a new home, as useful as a handsome new school, as liberal as an anti-poverty program, as commercial as a department store, as economic as a new industrial park, as convenient as a new expressway, and as understandable as a neighborhood play ground. In the beginning it was a matter of public-relations imagery, but soon it became program policy. . . .
>
> It was the popular support that Lee enjoyed which sustained his coalition of other forces in the community. "Group dynamics" is what he would call it, but whatever it was, the careful courting of the voters, the personal link with Yale, the creating of a pro-administration business organization, the accommodation with the politicians, and the control of the bureaucracy had the practical effert of immobilizing his opposition, giving him the support he needed, and creating apparent consensus. From afar the Lee coalition seemed to have the order, body, and unity of a symphony. But in many ways it was a one-man act with Lee assuming the combined role of a composer, arranger, conductor and performer.

The scholarly assessment of Professor Dahl and the realistic appraisal of an admirer like Allan Talbot still don't give us the Compleat Richard C. Lee. He was comfortable surrounding himself with vigorous, ambitious, and highly capable people who were given a pretty free hand under his aegis. He was a self-consuming perfectionist who upbraided aides for everything from an unseeded spot on a highly visible lawn, to a project map hung off-kilter during an official briefing, to a misquoted figure. Yet the humblest taxpayer's problem was one that could command his attention and move him repeatedly to official inquiries and phone interventions.

New Haven and the problems of New Haveners have shaped Dick Lee's life. When the Senate seat later filled by Thomas Dodd hung like a plum within his grasp he wouldn't reach for it because the Church Street project was badly stalled and home needs took first priority in his public vision and on his personal horizons. His simple belief in—and his unshakeable dedication to—this city and its people started young and they have never ended. And that is what we keep coming back to within the complexities of our subject: Dick Lee and his hometown. We see the child who was raised in good, traditional ways to serve as a citizen, the alert and sensitive boy on the working-class street who pondered the people around him—and the place. He grew up to citizenhood with a classic, almost a Greek, sense of the city-state's call upon his talents and of its shaping effect upon his life and the lives of his neighbors. What makes Dick Lee tick? Sometimes—though this may seem unduly sentimental or simplistic—sometimes I think the whole body of his accomplishment rests on two things: one, something unmentioned here thus far because it's so obvious: his ability to laugh; and two: his love of New Haven.

The Telephone Connection:
A Study of Some Social Effects of the Telephone Exchange in the City of New Haven, Connecticut

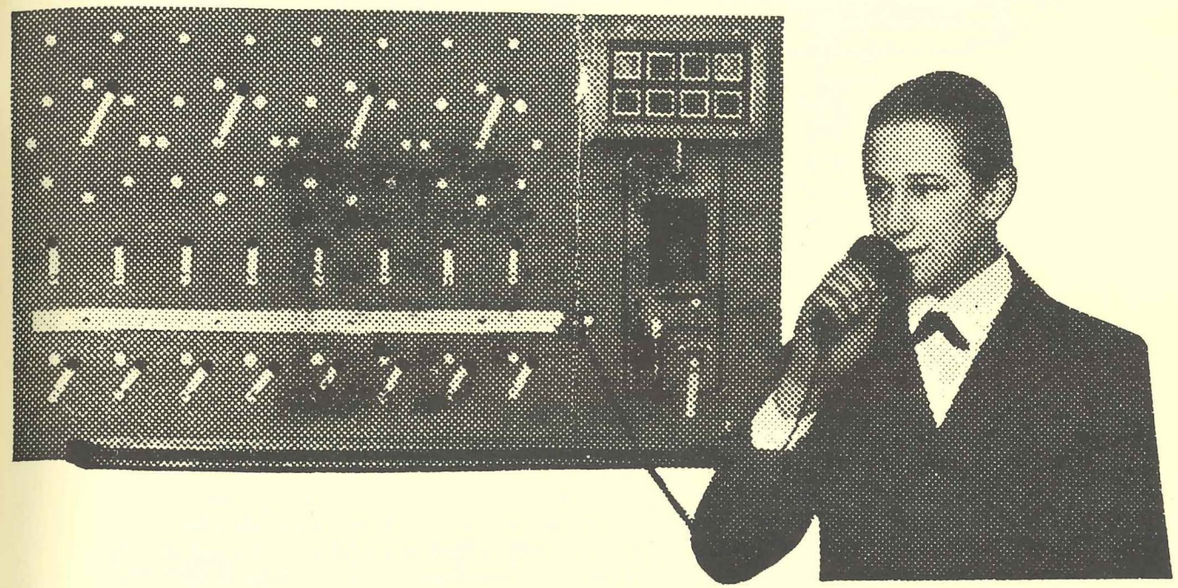
by Margot Hardenbergh

Introduction

Nowadays, it is taken for granted that the telephone lets people speak to anyone, almost anywhere, at any time. The telephone has become a necessity. We use it for shopping, for socializing, for banking, and for emergencies. The telephone is a legitimate welfare expense. One does not feel at home in a new place until the phone rings. Yet, the telephone is a recent phenomenon; it is only 110 years old.

To understand how the telephone exchange and its offspring, the telephone directory, have affected our lives I studied the reaction of those who were first offered the chance to be interconnected by telephone in their homes. Were they eager to have a telephone? Did they stop writing letters once they got one? Did the telephone affect their style of socializing? What were the effects of having a new medium of communication in the home? To answer those questions, this paper will focus on the city of New Haven and the residents' slow acceptance and use of the telephone in their homes to communicate with others just within their own city. For it is in New Haven, Connecticut, that the first commercial telephone exchange and directory were envisioned, produced, and put to use.

New Haven in the 1870s was a typical northeastern U.S. city. Young women's dreams were fulfilled by spending a summer's evening rocking in their porch hammocks with their beaus. Calling hours were customary and many a young



Working replica of the world's first commercial telephone switchboard. *Courtesy of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

man would try to time his obligatory visits to miss his hostess; they would leave their cards and go off with a buddy.

The city had thrown off its farming village life for an identity as a major industrial and shipping center. Entrepreneurs, whose parents had come from out of town, were replacing the native New Haven Yankee as the ruling class. People from Ireland and Eastern Europe were pouring into the port, filling jobs opened by the expanding manufacturing industries. The city was bursting out of its original nine squares into the periphery. Neighborhoods were changing, becoming ethnic enclaves or fine residential avenues.

Then, in January 1878, the residents of New Haven were the first to be asked to subscribe to a commercial telephone exchange, and the next month they saw the first telephone directory. They took the experiment of being able to communicate with others when and where they wanted very casually. In fact it would take over fifty years for half the households to have a telephone in their home. And it took almost this long for the telephone exchange and its directory to change their customs and habits. But changes did come. The convention of calling hours would come to an end. Chain stores would replace the independent grocer. Doctors would make fewer house calls. The function of the letter would intensify. And the people chosen to govern would be elected popularly.

The Telephone's Beginnings

The telephone industry was launched by the meeting of a telegraph employee, George Coy, and the inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell. The meeting took place at Skiff's Opera House on Chapel Street in New Haven on April 27, 1877. Bell was on a lecture/demonstration tour to promote his telephone. For the event in New Haven, he strategically arranged three telephones in the hall using telegraph wires to connect the New Haven audience with an audience in Hartford, approximately fifty miles away. Bell's partner, Thomas Watson, was stationed at an in-between point in Middletown. It was Watson who transmitted vocal and instrumental music simultaneously to the Hartford and New Haven audiences. It was an occasion of showmanship but also an opportunity for Bell to explain the process of the telephone to an audience of "highly cultivated people" of New Haven.[1] Bell was reported to have said,

> in the future, telegraph wires and telephony would be in use generally in dwellings, just as gas and water are supplied—not luxuries but necessaries. Wires would be connected to a central office whence communication could be established with the butcher, the baker, and all calls could be made by telephony and so conversation could be carried with distant cities for purposes of trade, business, etc.[2]

The above may have been Bell's first statement on the development of a telephone exchange but when asked by Coy how an exchange could be devised, Bell gave no clear answer. George Coy's presence at this telephone demonstration

is explained by the use of telegraph wires for the interconnection between Hartford and New Haven.

George Coy became intrigued by the idea of interconnecting telephones. As a manager of a telegraph office in New Haven, he also managed a "district box system." The district box system was advertised as a domestic telegraph that would allow one to tap a home telegraph to call for a messenger, the police, a hack, or the family doctor. Coy, with his knowledge of telegraphy and the district box system, was inspired by Bell's demonstration and acquired the Bell agency for New Haven and Middlesex counties. He made a mechanical device, the clock-type switchboard, to interconnect any two telephone lines when needed and thus gained the interest of businessman Herrick Frost to raise the capital.

The money was hard to come by and therefore the necessary equipment was made with the cheapest material available. The telephones, purchased through the agency, were standard for the time; a single instrument that when removed from a hook was spoken into and then placed near the ear to get the reply. Coy made the telephone lines out of common galvanized iron to be strung along rooftops and on trees. He made the switchboard out of the plainest wood and whatever materials were available, including wires from ladies' bustles.

The First Telephone Exchange

However crudely, George Coy had solved the problem of interconnecting any and all subscribers. There had been other exchanges but their purpose was to serve a small, identifiable group. In Hartford a pharmacist had set up a "mutual exchange" connecting physicians, a messenger, and his store. Even when approached by Frost, the pharmacist had no desire to expand his exchange.

George Coy's basic idea was to interconnect as many different stations or subscribers as possible. It was the mass marketing concept at work. Coy and his partner Herrick Frost were not limiting their search for potential customers, as is evidenced by their first circular advertising the exchange.[3]

On January 28, 1878, the world's first commercial exchange was opened for business with twenty-one subscribers. By the following month, the world's first telephone directory was published. There were fifty subscribers to the New Haven District Telephone Company (figure 1). One fifth, or eleven, were residences, a ratio of resident subscribers to total subscribers that would remain the same for quite some time.[4] And the type of person who had the telephone in his or her home would also hold steady for at least half a century.

The resident subscribers were from the upper middle and upper classes, people with money and social status. Of the first eleven resident subscribers, four, George W. Coy, H.P. Frost, M.F. Tyler, and Walter Lewis, were members of the phone company; one, Carrington, was a newspaper owner; three were businessmen who were also part of the ruling elite (Bigelow was governor of the state and also mayor at one time; Scranton was a mayor); and one, I.H. Bromley, was a leading newspaper editor and state legislator.[5]

The eleven resident subscribers paid eighteen dollars a year for a service that at best could be called an experiment. Two personal accounts from 1878 describe the service supplied and the public's reaction to the telephone exchange.

> I could talk to sixty people. I was given a telephone which I first put to my mouth and then to my ear. I was on a line with six or seven other people and when I talked, if the window was open, I could be heard all over the block and most of my time was spent asking the other fellow what he was saying.[6]

And from a druggist:

> after the telephone was installed customers would timidly approach the instrument, remove it gingerly from the hook and shout into the mouthpiece. Invariably, after calling the dental office, they would finish by going to the door and hollering across the street, "Hey Doc, how did you like my voice over there?"[7]

Many years would pass before the above accounts would appear quaint to New Haven residents. Changes in services available and in the equipment were being made constantly to attract new customers and then to meet the demand. George Coy had to rely on his own skills and ingenuity to adapt the switchboard. His original switchboard could connect three hundred wires, but only two conversations could be held at a time, unless the operator was willing to moisten his fingers and serve as the circuit for a third call. The operator had to make six different connections to complete a call. Within six months the switchboard was doubled in size but remained the clock-type, which required the operator to make six connections for each call. In another six months Coy devised a new board that used plugs; these became permanent spring jacks shortly thereafter. In 1879 the New Haven switchboard could accommodate thirty-five conversations. By 1880 Western Electric was making switchboards and New Haven purchased that company's "universal switchboard."

The Telephone Operator

The improvements on the switchboard not only allowed for more subscribers, but also changed the nature of the telephone operator's job. The first operators were boys, who moved naturally from telegraph to telephone operations: many of their duties as telegraph operators were carried over into the telephone industry. As the first circular for the phone company offered a messenger service, the boys served as valets and messengers also. They were helpful in putting up and repairing the lines that were strung on housetops and trees, and they were able to move quickly, connecting calls all over the switchboard.

In 1880 the phone company started hiring women as operators and by 1882 all daytime operators were women. The traditional reason given for this shift in hiring policy has been that the boys were rude and unmannerly when it came to

customer service. The attorney for the phone company, Morris Tyler, is reported to have said on the telephone, in conversation to his colleague, "You mustn't talk about the case over the telephone for I think the boy at the central office is listening in. 'No, I ain't,' said a boy's voice immediately."[8] The women hired may have also listened in, but they had an interest in remaining silent.

The job of telephone operator was one of the first white-collar jobs available to women, who made up 40 percent of the labor force in New Haven. The transition also occurred when improvements in the switchboard allowed the operator to sit and work from one location. With the universal switchboard, the operators would have to shout back and forth to complete a call, not run about the room. And there was also opportunity to knit and chat among themselves. A case could be made that women were hired as operators because they were willing to perform the very tedious job at the wages offered, $18 to $25 per month. The women may have been glad to have an opportunity to work outside of heavy industry and to work at a job providing a service that was recognized by others. Subscribers would send the operators presents and take them on outings.[9]

The telephone exchange may have encouraged many young women to get some education so they could become operators. However, the numbers were small. By 1930 only 2 percent of all working women were employed in the transportation or communication industry.[10] And, it was at this time that the hiring policies of the phone company encouraged either spinsterhood or immorality. The company had a policy of hiring unmarried women only and kept married women on only if they had tied the knot prior to 1925. This policy did not change until after the Second World War and even then only gradually.[11] For some women it meant job changes, for others a secret life, and for still others it gave a reason to remain single. It also made for a large turnover in personnel.

Many anecdotes of the early years of the telephone company tell of personnel waiting for their wages, of operators hanging over the banister and running downstairs to collect after a customer had paid his bill. The company went through many trials, including fierce competition, but was always able to acquire from the business community the capital it needed to continue in business. Coy retired from the New Haven outfit when Jay Gould bought a controlling interest. But those who had started with Coy regained control and changed the company's name first to the Connecticut District Telephone Company and then to the Southern New England Telephone Company. It had gotten involved in laying long lines from Rhode Island to New York, but then suggested that Theodore Vail and his company (later AT&T) take over all long lines. They had money problems and enough to worry about in keeping their own company going.

Promotional Strategies

One strategy to combat competition was pushing for state public utility status. The concept of public pay telephones was fostered and developed in order to

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

New Haven District Telephone Company.

OFFICE 219 CHAPEL STREET.

February 21, 1878.

Residences.

Rev. JOHN E. TODD.
J. B. CARRINGTON.
H. B. BIGELOW.
C. W. SCRANTON.
GEORGE W. COY.
G. L. FERRIS.
H. P. FROST.
M. F. TYLER.
I. H. BROMLEY.
GEO. E. THOMPSON.
WALTER LEWIS.

Physicians.

DR. E. L. R. THOMPSON.
DR. A. E. WINCHELL.
DR. C. S. THOMSON, Fair Haven.

Dentists.

DR. E. S. GAYLORD.
DR. R. F. BURWELL.

Miscellaneous.

REGISTER PUBLISHING CO.
POLICE OFFICE.
POST OFFICE.
MERCANTILE CLUB.
QUINNIPIAC CLUB.
F. V. McDONALD, Yale News.
SMEDLEY BROS. & CO.
M. F. TYLER, Law Chambers.

Stores, Factories, &c.

O. A. DORMAN.
STONE & CHIDSEY.
NEW HAVEN FLOUR CO. State St.
" " " " Cong. ave.
" " " " Grand St.
" " " Fair Haven.
ENGLISH & MERSICK.
NEW HAVEN FOLDING CHAIR CO.
H. HOOKER & CO.
W. A. ENSIGN & SON.
H. B. BIGELOW & CO.
C. COWLES & CO.
C. S. MERSICK & CO.
SPENCER & MATTHEWS.
PAUL ROESSLER.
E. S. WHEELER & CO.
ROLLING MILL CO.
APOTHECARIES HALL.
E. A. GESSNER.
AMERICAN TEA CO.

Meat & Fish Markets.

W. H. HITCHINGS, City Market.
GEO. E. LUM, " "
A. FOOTE & CO.
STRONG, HART & CO.

Hack and Boarding Stables.

CRUTTENDEN & CARTER.
BARKER & RANSOM.

Office open from 6 A. M. to 2 A. M.
After March 1st, this Office will be open all night.

New Haven Telephone Directory, 1878. *Courtesy of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

make the telephone appear as a public convenience and necessity.[12] The company also used publicity stunts to combat competition and increase subscribership. As early as November 1878, the phone company put telephone stations outside each polling place so that newspapers could report the returns immediately. And the newspapers paid back the phone company with publicity in the next day's papers.

The newspapers were one group that took advantage of the telephone immediately. One historian noted that newspaper reporters found the telephone "accelerated the transmission of a scoop, or a good story, or a simple news item." Before the telephone exchange was installed, reporters had to rely on their own two legs to get the story back to the desk, as few horse cars were available late at night and telegraph offices were few and far between.[13] The telephone exchange might have allowed reporters to devote more time to the gathering and reporting of news, but instead it probably allowed the assignment editors to request a greater number of stories from each reporter.

As another promotional device, the company placed a telephone in the office of the weather observer and advertised that subscribers could call to get the weather reports. Later the company was interested in promoting its headquarters and used flags on its buildings to signal the approach of storms.

The telephone company, as early as 1894, was preparing people for its sister technologies, radio and television. They gave play-by-play reports of Yale-Harvard football games and crew races. The mock-up of the field or waterway would be a marked canvas drawn between their headquarters and a neighboring building. A football or miniature boats were strung from a wire and moved over the canvas as directed by the "sports caster" on the phone at the event. These play-by-plays became annual events.

The phone company had overcome many obstacles, not the least of which were the other new technologies and natural disasters. The electric street lights installed in the 1880s and the electric trolley caused induction problems, and then the blizzards of 1884 and 1888 forced the company to rewire the city. The timing was fortuitous. The sixty- to ninety-foot Sequoia poles put up to facilitate repair of the iron wires during storms were then removed.[14] The discovery that hard-drawn copper wires were better conductors than iron ones was made shortly before the blizzard of '88, and soon the production of cables began. Copper replaced the rusting iron wires, metallic circuits replaced the use of the earth as the return circuit, and cables began to be buried.

The Acceptance of Telephones in Homes

By 1897 telephone connections were dramatically clearer. In 1903, with the installation of the common battery system, they could be made quicker. Party lines were becoming very rare in the city, and by 1930 the phone company started switching to the dial system. And yet, the residents of New Haven were slow

NEW HAVEN DIRECTORY

For the Year 1878.

ABBREVIATIONS.

In the following pages h stands for house; bds for boards; ave for avenue; n for near; c for corner; ab for above; r for rear; N. for North, E for East, S for South, W for West; pl. for place; sq. for square; op for opposite; B for building. The word street is implied.

AAL ABRAHAM, (*Kohn & Aal*), h 87 Court
Abbott Rev. Jacob J., h 257 Church
Abbott Charles H., traveling agent, Mallory Wheeler & Co., bds 95 Wooster
Abbott George S., box maker, h 173 Hamilton
Abbott Jane W., widow John S. C., h 200 East Grand c Poplar
Abdulla Osman, inspector arms, bds 79 Munson
Abel Frederick, news dealer, bds 157 Water
Abel Lewis, laborer, h 157 Water
Abel Oliver, saloon, 86 Court
Abraham A. E., inspector Winchester Arms Co., bds 79 Munson
Abraham Solomon, butcher, h 32 Prout
Abrams Aaron, painter, h 45 Edwards
Abrams William H., carriage painter, h 78 Asylum
Abrahamson Isaac H., toolmaker, h 27 Jefferson
Abt Caroline, h 10 Kossuth
Abt Nicholas, cabinet maker, h 146 Dover
Acker John C., h 15 Jefferson
Ackerman Adolph, molder, h 17 Grand
Ackerman Julius, machinist, h 288 Water
Ackerman Theodore J., h 198 Sherman ave
Ackrill Thomas, camp-chair turner, h 168 George
Ackrill Thomas R., Jr., mailing clerk Palladium, h 90 Humphrey
Adam James N., (*J. N. Adam & Co.*), h 139 Elm
Adam J. N. & Co., dry goods, 366 and 368 Chapel
Adam Samuel S., cashier, J. N. & Adam Co., bds 168 George
Adams Albert W., (*J. F. Goodrich & Co.*), bds 125 Chapel
Adams Amelia, widow William, h 317 Winchester ave
Adams Angella, 73 William
Adams Rev. Benjamin M., h 105 College
Adams Chas., emp'd Winchester Arms Co., bds 153 Division
Adams Charles A., flagman, h 41 Putnam
Adams C. B., homœpathic physician, (7) 298 Chapel, h 72 E Grand
Adams Edward, molder, h 311 East
Adams David R., carriage maker, h 63 Adeline
Adams Elizabeth Mrs., h 34 Arch
Adams Express Co., office RR depot, branch office 87 Orange
Adams George W., machinist, h 138 Goffe
Adams Henry, shoemaker, 154½ Chapel, h 200 Wooster
Adams Henry, 516 Chapel, bds do
Adams Harland P., fireman, h 43 Putnam
Adams John N., clock maker, h 120 St. John
Adams Jennie, dressmaker, bds 468 State
Adams John, carriage smith, h 51 Hazel
Adams John, oil dealer, h 174 E Grand
Adams John Q., clerk, 382 State, h 138 Goffe
Adams Nelson, bone sizing, etc., h 113 Whalley ave
Adams Nettie E., clerk, bds 6 Silver
Adams William J., joiner, bds 137 Goffe
Addis Jno. M., gun maker, bds Whitneyville
Addis Martin O., gun maker, h 99 Dixwell ave
Adelphi Building, 213 Chapel c Union
Adler Lewis L., (*Lutz & Adler*), bds 98 Olive
Adler Max (*Mayer, Strouse & Co.*), h 205 Orange
Adler Babetta, widow Siegmund, bds 4 Jefferson
Adlerhurst Bridget, Mrs., h 25 Locust
Adlerhurst John, polisher, bds 28 Locust
Adley John A., porter, 109 Church, h 69 Bristol
Adriance John B., (*Osborne & Adriance*), h 56 Howe

ADT JOHN builder of manufacturers' tools and machinery, 22, 24 and 26 Artizan, h 28 Lyon—*See adv. opposite*

Fancy Papers, at Odenkirchen's, 12 and 14 Artisan Street.

New Haven (City) Directory, 1878. *Courtesy of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

about accepting telephones in their homes so that they could call the "butcher, baker, friend or emergency help."

There seem to be many reasons for the slow growth. We can see by the primitive equipment and descriptions of its service that the telephone connection was weak, at best, before 1895. Yet businesses were quick to grasp the new service. Cost may have been a factor for residents. Starting at $18 per year, it went to a high of $90 for a private line in the early 1890s. But these rates were low compared to other cities' prices of $100 to $150 per year.[15] In 1895, when New Haven's rates were cut, there was an increase in subscribership, and my figures indicate that it was due mostly to an increase in resident subscribers. But at the same time there were improved connections. By 1902 the cost of a private line was $36 per year, a figure comparable to a yearly gas bill.[16] Yet even by 1937, only half of New Haven households had a telephone.[17]

The influx of immigrants may account for the low percentage of telephone households. In 1870, only 28 percent of the population was foreign-born, but by 1920 approximately two out of three residents were either immigrants or the children of immigrants.[18] It is doubtful that this group had the necessary money, interest, or confidence in their ability to speak English to equip their homes with telephones.

However, this influx of people changed the character of the city and in the process made many people come to consider the telephone a necessity. From 1870 to 1920, the population had more than tripled. People were moving further out from the center of town. The horse railroad of the sixties, seventies, and eighties and the electric trolley that started in 1892 made it *possible* for people to change jobs, and the telephone would make the transition *practical*. There was a need for the telephone, and shortly after the trolley began operating there was substantial growth in resident subscribership. It was the middle and upper classes who tended to move to the suburbs, and they were the ones who had home telephones. A husband could call to let his wife know when he would be home. A woman could keep up with old friends.

But peoples' lives did not appear to change dramatically because of the telephone. In fact the telephone was taken rather casually.[19] Diaries of the period contain no comments about the changes the telephone exchange had brought to their lives. One young woman remarked that she telephoned a friend but couldn't make the connection, so she visited another friend.[20] Another, older woman remarked that she "called up the younger Lin[d]sley to see the babies."[21] The women were not going to let the telephone reduce their face-to-face social contacts.

The Telephone Exchange's Effect on Letter Writing

The telephone served as a means to "see" other people, and as it became more prevalent, the incidence of short date-setting notes sent through the mail decreased. But the telephone exchange would be around a long time before

Chapel and State Streets, New Haven, c. 1890. *Courtesy of the New Haven Colony Historical Society.*

people would let it affect their use of the postal service. In the 1880s and 1890s, the postal service supplied daily, face-to-face social contact with the postman. New Haven was known for its excellent mail service; in 1845, it was one of the first in the United States to issue a municipal stamp for prepayment of postage.[22] It had a number of daily pickups and deliveries, including, in 1888, a 4 P.M. Sunday collection.

Because there is no record of the number of pieces of matter the postal service handled before 1926, it cannot be proven that the telephone exchange affected letter writing. However, the people of New Haven held on to this form of social contact. They were in daily contact with their neighbors through the postal carrier, and they enjoyed conversing with him. The Rules and Regulations of the New Haven Post Office in 1888 had a special section on relations with the public. These rules indicate that mail carriers met with everyone on their delivery route, knew them personally, and had to be reminded to "not give out information that had been obtained of a private character."[23]

Instead of writing short notes to make appointments, people now telephoned, but they kept their habit of writing letters of a more substantial nature for some time to come. Only people born in recent times choose often to replace letter writing with a telephone call. They have developed other methods of maintaining face-to-face social contact.

The Telephone Exchange's Effect on Social Life

Another method of maintaining social contact, the convention of calling hours, was affected by the telephone exchange. Since people were no longer a short distance from everyone they knew in the city, they used the telephone to confirm that there would be someone there to visit. No longer were certain times such as Thursday afternoons kept open for calling hours; instead visits were made at a time convenient for both parties.

Having the opportunity to converse with another person at any time also had an impact on food shopping patterns. Retailers often went from house to house in the morning to take orders for delivery later in the day. Women would plan their food needs, relying on the visits, and place their orders for the day at the appropriate time. But with the telephone exchange not only did the independent retailers then call for the orders rather than visit in person, but women had the opportunity to place late orders by telephone, much to the consternation of many a retailer.[24]

Women started frequenting the chain stores not only to look over the produce, but to see other people. They had been able to see the produce in summertime when the "hucksters" came around to them. Perhaps if the independent store owner had kept up his door-to-door solicitation and refrained from using the convenience of the telephone exchange, the chain stores would not have succeeded in closing the doors of most independent retail stores.

The Telephone Exchange's Effect on Medical Practice

The medical profession was another area that changed dramatically with the advent of the telephone exchange. Doctors were among the first subscribers. Medical diagnosis definitely benefited from the give and take of conversations in which a patient could say he felt sick and the doctor could ask questions to get the patient to reveal the symptoms of the disease. From the description he received over the telephone, a doctor could make a judgment as to whether the patient needed to be seen or could be given a medicine or placebo by telephone. The doctor could answer an emergency more quickly, and the exchange allowed the doctor to care for more people. Nowadays some doctors have their practice so well organized that they are able to set aside an hour each day for their patients to telephone them. Because doctors have increased their patient load, they now find it more practical to have the patients visit them instead of spending the time traveling to each patient. The telephone exchange thus hastened the end of the era of house-calls.

The Effects of a New Medium of Communication

In the fifty years of New Haven social history that I studied I found that people were unwilling to resort to an inferior form of social contact. They will make visits to the doctor, the chain store, or anywhere they can to converse face-to-face with another person. The fact that psychiatrists now notice a neurosis called agoraphobia gives support to the idea of the basic human need of social contact in person. Although the telephone offers the convenience of saving time, it will not replace visiting. Although the telephone offers the opportunity to narrow the possible stimuli and have us concentrate on the words, the tone of voice, and inflection, we will still want to converse with people in the same setting as that occupied by the other person, to see as much as we can of what may be influencing the other person. Even with the prospect of picture phones, we will still seek to be in the same environment as the person with whom we are conversing.

We have just started realizing the effects of the telephone exchange, and we are beginning to decide how to use it. The earlier example of doctors planning their days to allow for telephone calls is an example of people taking control of the technology. With the telephone exchange, one was connected to many people. One could be interrupted at any time also. The telephone rings insistently. It shouts that there may be good news or bad, though it was rarely used to deliver bad news early in its history. A telegram was more efficient at conveying a message of death, of finality that requested no response.

The telephone exchange requires two parties to function. The person on the other end of the line may be offering you help, but in any case it interrupts your current activities. It is only through time and use that we have developed a sense of complacency about that insistent ring. We can now decide whether or not to

allow the telephone to interrupt us. People are developing the habit of taking the phone off the hook or letting it ring if they do not wish to be disturbed. Answering machine technology is allowing people to answer the phone at a time when they want to receive messages. We can be connected with more than one other person at a time, and at far more places. The technology is allowing us to control it rather than vice versa.

The Effects of the Telephone Directory

One aspect of the telephone exchange still exerts complete control, the control of giving a person a name, address, and number: that is the telephone directory. New Haven was not only the first place to have a telephone exchange, but also first in printing a telephone directory. In 1878 the telephone directory was printed to allow other subscribers to know whom they could telephone. Ten years later they gave each person a different number. And in 1889 the telephone directory not only reported all the subscribers, but also gave a particular way to identify each subscriber—by number.

The subscribers' list went through many changes. At first identifying residences, professions, business places, etc., within New Haven, it then added directions on how to use this new convenience, including warnings against use of the telephone at the onset of a storm. Then there was a state directory divided by exchanges. Subscribers would be identified by house, profession, or business and also by address within an exchange area. But all the subscribers within the state could be identified. By 1890, the subscribers were notified in their directory that they must call other people by their number. Some directories would have advertisements, some not; some would show the types of equipment available, while others would appear as just lists of numbers and names. Some would have a classified list of business subscribers and an index of advertisements. But people always had at least a number and address identifying them.

The telephone directory may have been the first list that let people identify themselves, state their position in life as they saw it. Previously, as now, there were directories of members for various organizations; a club or association printing or listing its members. The directory used by many different people was the "city directory." However, comparing an 1878 telephone directory with an 1878 city directory, one can see how much more information one could get from a city directory (figure 3). The city directory gave a person's home address, work address, type of work or position held, and whether he or she owned their home or rented. In general, the person's status in the community could be quickly determined by looking him or her up in the city directory.

The telephone directory has been a leveling, equalizing force. It would mean that people would be counted, not differentiated. One could quickly contact many different people without taking into account where they worked. In some

years not even their address could be found, and certainly their social status could not be determined.

In many cases it would no longer be significant whom one contacted but how many. One could make the argument that the politics of New Haven changed because of the telephone directory. Before the 1840s, it was the patricians, or those of Yankee heritage, who held public office. Then the entrepreneurs and businessmen supplanted them. But they in turn were replaced at the turn of the century, just when resident subscribers were increasing, by people whose parents had come from foreign lands. They were able to gain political power through their popularity, not through their wealth or social status. There were still groups, but the recent arrivals would win out because of their popularity with various ethnic groups. Not until the 1950s, when the majority of people were listed in the telephone directory, would ethnic politics decline.[28] The one remaining force in New Haven politics is popularity, a factor that can be attributed to the telephone directory among other technologies.

Conclusion

The slow acceptance of telephones into New Haven households indicates the interest people had in using the new technology as they wished. Technologies are tools that can be used as we will as long as we have the time or the understanding. They can be shut down or expanded, made so expensive that only a few can use them or made universally available. In New Haven the telephone exchange has been used by the residents to make more social contact, face-to-face whenever possible, as it had gotten more difficult to just happen upon that contact they wanted. The exchange allowed them to keep their individuality, to remain in the same interest groups in spite of the rapid growth and expansion of the city. At the same time the telephone directory served as a leveler, to let everyone meet the world on an equal footing.

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NOTES

1. J. Leigh Walsh, as quoted in the New Haven *Daily Morning Journal and Courier* in *Connecticut Pioneers in Telephony* (New Haven: Morris F. Tyler chapter Telephone Pioneers of America, 1950), p. 19.
2. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
3. On hindsight, Coy appears cautious as he contracted with the Bell Company for only one hundred telephones for ten years. See Walsh, *Connecticut Pioneers*, p. 34.
4. The October 2, 1882, directory listed 645 subscribers, including only 155 residences. By 1898, the directory listed approximately 1,600 subscribers with 580 identified as "house." It was during this latter period the number of subscribers increased dramatically, and my figures indicate that it was primarily an increase in resident subscribership.

5. Ferris remains unaccounted for and Rev. Todd, as the very first subscriber, remains an anomaly. He was a minister of a church serving the elite, including many subscribers on this list. A reason for his subscribing to something that many considered a luxury could be given as his desire to remain friendly with his parishioners, who included Morris Tyler, the first legal advisor and later president of the phone company. However, Todd was one of those who later switched to the competing company, whose equipment was superior.
6. Victor Morris Tyler, *A Short Review of Connecticut Telephone, 1878-1907* (New Haven, 1957).
7. Walsh, *Connecticut Pioneers*, p. 56.
8. Tyler, *A Short Review*, p. 3.
9. Walsh, *Connecticut Pioneers*, p. 133.
10. *A Handbook of Social Statistics of New Haven, Connecticut*, compiled by Thelma A. Dreis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 73.
11. Conversation with Reuel Benson, retired employee of SNET Co. and author of "The First Century of the Telephone in Connecticut." The policy of hiring only unmarried women was explained by the phone company as following public opinion during the Depression. Because of the scarcity of jobs it was felt that there should be only one wage earner per family and it should be the male. Weak as this argument is, in my opinion, it becomes even less sound when the policy took much union effort to change as much as twenty years later.
12. I use the word *appear* because the company constantly moved the pay phones from store to store.
13. Fred DeLand, "Notes on the Development of Telephone Service, III," reprinted from *The Popular Science Monthly* (1907): 51.
14. There were no comments about the size of the poles, the shadows they cast, and the great number of wires on the poles. New Haven architectural historian Elizabeth Mills Brown has found only one reference based on aesthetics to the need to bury the wires. That one comment was made by the visiting architect Cass Gilbert, but it was made in reference to the telegraph wires, as his visit was after the phone company had buried the central city phone lines.
15. Sidney Aronson, "Bell's Electric Toy," in *The Social Impact of the Telephone*, ed. Ithiel de Sola Pool (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977), p. 31.
16. William Graham Sumner Private Records, 1854-1925, Sumner-Rockwell Collection, The New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, New Haven, Connecticut.
17. Conversation with Reuel Benson. I have been unable to get old records of households and telephones so that I could fully analyze telephone households. Although my research indicates SNET Co. had such records, it is understood that they have been destroyed. Conversation with Matilda Tyler suggested it may have been the same half that had indoor plumbing.
18. August B. Hollingshead and Fredrick C. Redlich, M.D., *Social Class and Mental Illness, A Community Study* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1958), pp. 59, 61.
19. Because I am concerned with home use of the telephone, most of my research tended to revolve around women. In the upper and middle classes they were the ones at home. They were also the ones who kept any records of a personal nature.
20. Ida Mabel Landcraft Diaries, 1887-1890, Women's Collection (1704-1930), The New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, New Haven, Connecticut.
21. Mary W. B. Deming Diary, 1890-1908, Women's Collection (1704-1930), The New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, New Haven, Connecticut.
22. *New Haven Post Office 1755-1975*, United States Postal Service Bicentennial Issue of *Newsflash* 4 (July 1975).
23. *Rules and Regulations of the New Haven Post Office* (New Haven, 1888), p. 19.
24. L. D. H. Weld, *Marketing Survey of New Haven* (New Haven Chamber of Commerce, Town and City Improvement Committee, 1917). The telephone solicitation and delivery of orders, however, would not keep the business away from the large chain store operations. Chain stores started appearing before the First World War and effectively ran out the small, independent retailers after the war. As one chain store advertisement put it in 1920, "If the housewife who telephones in her orders

could see the untidiness and unsanitary conditions of the grocery store where she trades by telephone, she would be horrified."
25. Article in *Register,* Feb. 13 and 20, 1920, in Rollin G. Osterweis, *Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).
26. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 51.

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